

THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

Divided into four Books.

Written in Latine by the learned
and devout man

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*And translated into English
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for Alberti Fabrie
At Roam. M. DC. L.



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OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

The first Book.

CHAP. I.

*If the Imitation of Christ, and
contempt of all the vanities of
the world.*

 **E** that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, saith our Lord. These are the words Christ, by which we are admonished, that we ought to imitate his life, and manners, if we will partakers of his Divine light, be delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our

A chieftest

2 *The following Book I.*
 chi: self care be to meditate upon
 the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ ex-
-ceedeth all the doctrine of the
Saints: and he that had the light
of Spirit, would discover therein a
secret and hidden Manna. But it
falleth out that many, who often
hear the Gospel of Christ, do yet
feel in themselves but slender mo-
tion of any holy desire, because
they are void of the spirit of Christ.
But whosoever will fully and feel-
ingly understand the words of
Christ, must endeavour to con-
form his life wholly to the life of
Christ.

3. What will it avail thee, to
dispute profoundly of the Tri-
nity, if thou be void of humilitie,
& thereby displeasing to the Tri-
nity? High words surely make a
man neither holy nor just; but a
virtuous life maketh him dear to
God. I had rather feel compun-
ction, then understand the defi-
nition thereof. If thou didst know
the

the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee, without charity, and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but onely to love God, and wholly to serve him. This is the highest wisdome, by contempt of the world, to tend towards the kingdome of heaven.

4. It is therefore vanitie to seek after fading riches, and to repose trust in them. It is also vanity to gape after honours, and to climbe to high degrees. It is vanity to follow the appetites of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou must afterwards suffet more grievous punishments. Vanity it is, to wish to live long, and to be carelesse to live well. It is vanity to mind onely this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come. It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither, where everlasting joy is permanent.

A 2 5. Call

5. Call often to mind this proverb, That the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the affection of visible things, and to turn thy self to the invisible. For they that follow their sensuality, do stain their own consciences, and loose the grace of God.

C H A P. I I.

Of the humble conceit of our selves.

ALL men by nature desire to know: but what availeth knowledge without the feare of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himself, laboureth to understand the course of the heavens. Whoso knoweth himself well, groweth daily more contemptible in his own conceit, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I understood all that is to be known in the world,

world, and were not in charitie, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge according to my deeds?

2. Give not thy self to inordinate desire of knowledge: for therein is much distraction and deceit. The learned are willing to seem so to others, and to be accounted wise. There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit the soul: and he is very unwise, that bestoweth his labour about other things, then those that may avail him for the health of his soul. Many words do not satisfie the desires of the heart: but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou understandest, so much the more grievously shalt thou therefore be judged, unlesse thy life be also more holy. Be not therefore

extolled in thy own mind for any art or science which thou knowest, but rather let the knowledge given thee, make thee more fearfull. If thou thinkest that thou understandest and knowest much; know also, that there be many things more which thou knowest not. Think not too well of thy self, but rather confess thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy self before others, sith there be many more learned and skilfull in the Law then thou? If thou wilt know or learn any thing profitable, desire not to be known, and to be little esteemed of by men.

4. The highest and most profitable reading, is the true knowledge and consideration of our selves. It is great wisdome and perfection, to esteem nothing of our selves, and to think alwayes well, and commendably of others. If thou shouldest see another openly sinne, or commit any heynous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem

steem the better of thy self, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remaiu in good e-
state. We are all frail; but thou oughtest to esteem none more frail then thy self.

CHAP. III.

Of the doctrine of Truth.

Happy is he whom Truth by it self doth teach, not by fi-
gures, and voices that passe away; but as it is in it self. Our own o-
pinion and sense do often deceive us, and it discerns little. What availeth it to dispute and contend about dark and hidden things, whereas for being ignorant of them, we shall not so much as once be reprehended at the day of judgement? It is a great folly to negle&t the things that are profit-
able and necessary, and give our minds to that which is curious and hurtfull: we have eyes and do not see.

A 4 2. And

2. And what have we to do with the terms and distinctions of Logicians? He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh, is delivered from multitudes and diversities of opinions. By that one Word all things do speak, and all declare the same: and this is the beginning, and that which speaketh unto us. No man without that Word, understandeth or judgeth rightly. He to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, & seeth all things in one, may enjoy a quiet mind, and remain peaceable in God. O God, the eternal truth, make me one with thee in everlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read and hear many things. In thee is all that I would have, and can desire. Let all Doctors hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone unto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himself, and becometh inwardly sincere and pure;

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so much the more, and higher mysteries doth he understand without labour, for that he receiveth light of understanding from above. A pure, sincere, and stayed spirit, is not distracted, though he be employed in many works: for that he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inward tranquillitie, without seeking himself in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more, then the unmortified desires of thine own heart? A good and devout man, first of all disposeth in himself his outward works: neither do they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination, but he ordereth them to the prescript of reason. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to overcome himself? This ought to be our endeavour, to conquer our selves daily, to wax stronger, and be more able to subdue our passions, and alwayes in this way to get some ground. **A 5 4.** All

4. All perfection in this life, hath some imperfections mixt with it : and no knowledge of ours is void of darknesse, and ignorance. An humble knowledge of thy self is a more secure way to God, then a deep search after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the onely knowledge of any thing whatsoever is to be disliked, it being good in it self, and ordained by God: but a good conscience, and a vertuous life, is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeavour rather to get knowledge, then to live well, therefore they are often deceived, and reap either none, or very slender profit of their labours.

5. Oh, if men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices, and planting of virtues, as they do in moving doubts and questions, neither would there so much hurt be done, nor so great scaudal be given in the world, nor so

so much loosenesse be practised in places erected for virtue ! Truly at the day of judgement, we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done: nor how well we have spoken, but how virtuously we have lived. Tell me now, where are all those great Doctors and Masters with whom thou wast so well acquainted, whilst they lived and flourished in learning ? Now others possess their livings, and perhaps do scarce ever think of them. In their life time they seemed something, and now they are not spoken of.

6. Oh how quickly doth the glory of this world passe away ! Would God their life had been answerable to their learning, then had their study and reading been to good purpose. How many perish in this world by reason of vain learning, who take little care of the service of God ? & because they rather choose to be great then humble : therefore they vanish away

away in their own thoughts. He is truly great that is great in charity. He is truly great, that is little in himself, and that maketh no account of the height of honour. He is truly wise, that accounteth all earthly things as dung, that he may gain Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfillleth the will of Christ, and forsaketh his own.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence, and Foresight in our actions.

WE must not give ear to every suggestion or instinct, but ought warily and leisurely to ponder things according to the will of God. But (alas) such is our weakness, that we rather often believe, and speak evil of others, then good. Those that are perfectly virtuous, do not easily give credit to every thing that is told them, for they know that humane frailty is prone to evil, and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stiffly in thine own conceits ; as also not to believe every thing which thou hearest: nor presently to relate again to others, what thou hast heard, or doest believe. Consult with him that is wise and of a good conscience, and seek to be instructed by a better then thy self, rather then to follow thine own inventions. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himself, and more subject and resigned unto God: so much the more prudent shall he be in all his affairs, and enjoy greater peace and quiet of heart.

CHAP. V.
*Of the reading of holy
Scriptures.*

TRUTH, not eloquence is to be sought for in holy Scriptures.
Each

Each part of them is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We should rather search after spirituall profit in Scriptures, then subtilty of speech. We ought to read devout and simple books as willingly as high and learned. Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or small learning: but let the pure word of truth move thee to read. Search not who spake this, or that, but mark what is spoken.

2. Men passe away, but the truth of our Lord remaineth for ever. God speaketh unto us sundry wayes, without respect of persons. Our own curiosity often hindreth us in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine, and discusse that which we should rather passe over without more ado. If thou desire to reap profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: never desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, and hear with silence the words of hol-

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ly men: dislike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

C H A P. V I.

Of inordinate Desires, and Affections.

WHENSOEVER a man desireth any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himself. The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble in spirit, live together in all peace. The man that is not wholly dead in himself, is quickly tempted, and overcome in small and trifling things. The weak in spirit, and that is yet in a manner subject to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himself altogether from earthly desires. And therefore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himself from them: and easily falleth into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And

2. And if he hath followed therein his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience, for that he yielded to his passion, which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of minde therefore, is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the heart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spirituall and fervent.

C H A P. VII.

Of flying vain Hope, and Pride.

HE is vain that putteth his trust in men, or creatures: Be not ashamed to serve others, for the love of Jesus Christ: nor to be esteemed poor in this world. Presume not upon thy self, but place thy hope in God. Do what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust not thine own knowledge, nor in the wisdome or prudence

dence of any living creature, but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, if thou have it; nor in the power of thy friends, but in God, who giveth all things, and above all desireth to give thee himself. Extoll not thy self for the stature, and beautie of thy body, which is dissolved, and disfigured with every little sicknesse. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts or wit, least thereby thou displease God, to whom appertaineth all the good whatsoever nature hath given thee.

3. Esteem not thy self better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accounted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good works, for the judgements of God are farre different from the judgements of men, and that often offendeth him, which please them. If there be any good in thee,

thee, believe that there is much more in others, that so thou maist the better keep within thy heart the precious treasure of humility. It is no prejudice unto thee, to esteem thy self worse then all the world: but it hurteth thee very much, to preferre thy self before any one. The humble enjoy continuall peace: but in the heart of the proud, is envy and often indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

*That too much familiarity is
to be shunned.*

LAy not thy heart open to every one: but treat of thy affairs with the wise, and such as fear God. Converse not much with young people, and strangers. Flatter not the rich; neither do thou appear willingly before great personages. Keep company with the humble, simple, devout, and virtuous; and conferre with them of those

those things, that may edifie. Be not familiar with any woman, but in generall commend all good women to God. Desire to be familiar with God alone, and his Angels, and flie the knowledge of men.

2. We must have charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of some person that is unknown, is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstanding is not gratefull to the eyes of the beholders. We think sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distast them with our disordered manners, and the evil customes which they discover in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience, and Subjection.

IT is a great matter to live in Obedience, to be under a Superior, and not to be at our own disposition. It is much safer to live in

in the state of subjection, then of government. Many live under Obedience, rather for necessity then for charity: and such are discontented, and do easily repine and murmur. Neither can they attain to freedme of mind, unlesle they willingly and heartily put themselves under Obedience for the love of God. Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest, but in humble subjection under the government of a Superior. The imagination and change of places, have deceived many.

2. True it is, that every one willingly doth that which agreeth with his own sense and liking; and is apt to affect those most, that are of his own mind: But if God be amongst us, we must leave our own judgement, that so peace and quietnesse may be the better preserved. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things? Trust not therefore too much to thine own conceits: but be willing to hear
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the judgement of others. If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding doest leave it for God, and followest the opinion of another, it shall be better for thee.

3. I have often heard, that it is more secure to hear and take counsell, then to give it. It may also fall out, that each ones opinion may be good: but to refuse to yield to others, when as reason, or cause requireth it, is a token of wilfulness and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of the avoiding superfluity of words.

FLY the unquietnesse of men as much as thou canst, for the talk of worldly affirs hindreth very much, although they be recounted with sincere intention: for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had oftentimes held my peace, when I have spoken: and that

that I had not been in company. Why do we so willingly speak, and talk with one another, when notwithstanding we seldom return to silence, without hart of conscience? The cause wherefore we so willingly talk, is, for that by discoursing one with another, we seek to receive comfort one of another, and desire to ease our mind, over wearied with sundry thoughts: and we talk willingly, & think of those things which we love best, and most desire; or of those, which we feel most contrary unto us.

2. But alas, often times in vain, and to no end: for this outward comfort, is cause of no small losse of inward, and divine consolation. Therefore we must watch and pray, least our time passe without any fruit or profit. If it be lawfull, and expedient for thee to speak, speak those things that may edifie. An evil custome, and neglect of our own good, doth very much slack

slack the rains to inconsiderate speech: Yet devout discourses of heavenly things, do greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one mind and spirit be gathered together in God.

CHAP. XI.

*Of the obtaining of peace, and
zeal of spirituall profit.*

WE might enjoy peace, if we would not busie our selves with the words and deeds of other men, which appertain nothing to our charge. How can he live long in peace, that thrusteth himself into the cares of others, or that little or seldome recollecteth himself within his own breast? Blessed are the simple and pure minds, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect, and contemplative: Because they laboured to mortifie themselves wholly

wholly to earthly desires, and therefore they could with their whole heart, give themselves to God, and freely attend to their own affairs. We are too much lead by our own passions, and too solicitous for transitory things. We also seldom overcome any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a fervent desire to profit in spirit: and therefore we remain cold in devotion, and full of tepiditie.

3. if we were perfectly dead unto our selves, and not intangled within our own breasts, then we might also have some taste of divine things, and feel the sweetnesse of heavenly contemplation. The greatest, and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free from our passions, and disordered inclinations: neither do we endeavour to enter into the path of perfection, which the Saints have walked before us: and when any small adversity befalleth us,

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we are too quickly dejected, and turn our selves to humane com-
forts.

4. If we endeavour like men of courage, to stand continually in battell, surely we should feel the favourable assistance of God from heaven. For he who giveth us occa-
sion to fight, to the end we may get the victory, is ready to suc-
cour those that fight manfully, and do trust in his grace. If we esteem our progresse in Religious life, to consist onely in these exte-
riour observations, our devotion will quickly be at an end. Let us set the ax to the root, that being freed from passions, we may enjoy true peace of mind.

5. If every year we would root out one vice, we should quickly be-
come perfect men. But now often times we perceive it goeth contra-
ry, and that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conversion, then after many years of our professi-

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on. Our fervour and profit should increase daily ; but now it is accounted a great matter, if one can attain but some part of his first spirit. If we would use but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to perform all things afterwards with ease and joy of heart.

6. It is a hard matter to leave that to which we are accustomed; but harder to do against our own wills. But if thou dost not overcome little and easie things; how wilt thou overcome harder matters? Resist thy inclination in the first motions, and break off evil customes, least perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou didst consider how much inward peace unto thy self, and joy to others thou shouldest procure by demeaning thy self well, I suppose thou wouldest be more carefull of thy spirituall profit.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the profit of Adversity.

IT is good that we have sometimes grieve and adversities : for they often make a man enter into himself, and remember that he is here in banishment , and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing. It is good that we be sometimes contradicted ; and that there be an evil or hard conceit had of us : and this, although we do, and intend well. These things help often to the attaining of humility, and defend us from vain glory: for then we chiefly seek God for our inward witnessse, when outwardly we be contemned by men, and when there is no credit given unto us.

2. And therefore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needed not to seek many comforts of men. When a good and virtuous man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with evil thoughts ,

B 2 then

then he understandeth better the great need he hath of Gods assistance, without whose help he perceiveth he can do nothing that is good. Then also he sorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miseries he suffereth. Then is he weary of living longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be dissolved, and be with Christ. Then also he well perceiveth, that complete security, and perfect peace, cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptation.

SO long as we live in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation : for as it is written in Job : Temptation is the life of man upon earth. Every one therefore ought to be carefull, and diligently to arm himself with prayer against his temptations; least the Devil find time and place to deceive

deceive him ; who never sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whom he may devour. No man is so perfect and holy, but hath sometimes temptations: and we cannot be altogether free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable unto men, though they be troublesome, and grievous : for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. All the Saints have passed and profited through many tribulations and temptations ; and they that could not bear temptations, became reprobate and fell from God. There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations or adversities.

3. There is no man that is altogether free from temptations, whilst he liveth on earth, for in our selves is the cause thereof, being born with inclination to evil. When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another cometh: and we shall ever have something

to suffer, because we have lost that innocencie with which we were created. Many seek to fly temptations, & do fall more gievously into them. By flight alone we cannot overcome ; but by patience and true humility, we become stronger then all our enemies.

4. He that onely avoideth them outwardly , and doth not pluck them up by the root, shall profit little : yea temptation will the sooner return unto him ; and he shall feel himself in worse case then before. By little and little, and b^v patience with longanimity (through Gods help) thou shalt more easily overcome, then with violence, and thine own importunity. Often take counsel in temptations, and deal not roughly with him that is tempted ; but give him comfort, as thou wouldest wish to be done to thy self.

5. The beginning of all evil temptations , is inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God: for

for as a ship without a stern is to-
sed to and fro with the waves ; so
the man that is negligent, and lea-
veth his purpose is many wayes
tempted. Fire trieth iron, and tem-
ptation a just man. We know not
oftentimes what we are able to do,
but temptations do shew us what
we are. We must be watchfull, e-
specially in the beginnig of the
temptation, for the enemy is then
more easily overcome, if he be not
suffered to enter the doore of our
hearts, but be resisted without the
gate, at his first knock. Where-
fore one said : Withstand the be-
ginnings, for an after remedy
comes often too late. First there com-
meth to the mind an evil thought,
then a strong imagination there-
of, afterwards delight, and an evil
motion, and then consent; and so
by little and little our wicked ene-
my getteth full entrance, whilst
he is not resisted in the beginning.
And how much the longer one is
negligent in resisting : so much

weaker doth he become dayly, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest temptations in the beginning of their conversion : others in the latter end ; others again are much troubled almost through the whole time of their life. Some are but easily tempted according to the wisdome, and equity of the divine appointment , which weigheth the state and deserts of men : and ordaineth all things for the saving, of his elect and chosen servants.

7. We ought not therefore to despair when we are tempted, but so much the more fervently to pray unto God, that he will vouchsafe to help us in all tribulation ; who surely according to the saying of S. Paul, will make with temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustain it. Let us therefore humble our selves under the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations ; for he will save, and exalt the humble in spirit.

8. In

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proved, how much he hath profited ; and his merit is thereby the greater before God, and his virtues do more openly appear. Neither is it any great matter if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeleth no heaviness: but i. in time of adversity he bear himself patiently , there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great temptations, and are often overcome in small ones , which do dayly occurre; to the end that being humbled, they may never presume on themselves in great matters, who in so small things do see themselves so weak.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash Judgement.

TURN thine eyes unto thy self, and beware thou judge not rashly the deeds of other men. In judging of others a man alwayes laboureth in vain, often erreth, and

B 5 quickly

quickly sinneth ; but in judging and discussing of himself, he alwayes laboureth fruitfully. We often judge of things according to our own desire; for private affection bereaves us easily of true judgement. If God were always the pure intension of our desire, we should not be so much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2. But oftentimes some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth us after it. Many secretly seek themselves in their actions, and know it not. They seem also to live in good peace of mind, when things are done according to their will, and opinion ; but if it succeed otherwise then they desire, they are straightwayes troubled, and much afflicted. The diversities of judgements and opinions, cause oftentimes discontents between religious and devout persons.

3. An old custome is hardly broken,

broken, and no man is willingly lead further then himself liketh. If thou dost more relie upon thine own reason or industry, then upon the virtue of obedience to Jesus Christ, it will be long before thou be illuminated with grace, for almighty God will have us perfectly subject unto him, and that we transcend the narrow limits of humane reason, enflamed with his love.

CHAP. XV.

Of Works done of Charity.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man, is any evil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that standeth in need, a good work is sometimes to be left off, or changed also for a better. For by doing this, a good work is not lost, but changed into another of greater merit. The exteriour work without charity, profiteth nothing; but whatsoever is done

done of charity, be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it is fruitfull, and of great esteem in the sight of God. For God weighth more with how much love one worketh, then how much he doth. He doth much, that loveth much.

2. He doth much that doth a thing well : he doth well that rather serveth the common good of others, then his own will. Often-times it seemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality : because naturall inclination, self-will, hope of reward, and desire of our own commodity, will seldom be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, seeketh himself in nothing ; but onely desireth in all things that the glory of God should be exalted. He also envieth none, because he loveth no private good ; neither will he rejoice in himself, but wisheth above all things to enjoy God. He attributeth

teth nothing that is good to any man, but wholly referreth it unto God, from whom , as from the fountaine all things proceed : in whom finally all Saints have perfect rest, by fruition of his glory. O he that had one spark of perfect charity, how easily would he discern, that all earthly things be full of vanity !

C H A P. X V I.

*Of bearing with the defects
of others.*

THOSE things that a man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, untill God ordain otherwise. Think that perhaps it is better so, for thy tryall and patience, without which our merits ; are not much to be esteemed. Thou oughtest to pray notwithstanding, when thou hast such impediments, that God would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou maist bear them patiently.

2. If

2. If one that once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him, but commit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in all his servants, who knoweth how to turn evil into good. Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others : for that thy self also hast many things, which must be suffered by others. If thou canst not make thy self such an one as thou wouldest, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking ? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3. We will have others severely corrected, and will not be corrected our selves. The large liberty of others displeaseth us; and yet we will not have our desires denied us. We will have others kept under by rigorous laws, but in no sort will we our selves be restrained. And thus it appeareth how seldom we weigh

weigh our neighbour in the same ballance with our selves. If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learn to bear one anothers burden; for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man sufficient of himself, no man endued with so much wisdome as he needeth: but we ought to bear with one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, and admonish one another. Adversity best discovereth how great virtue each one hath: for occasions make not a man frail, but do shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Religious life.

THou must learn to break thy own will in many things, if thou wilt have peace and concord with others. It is no small matter to

to dwell in community, or in a congregation, and to converse therein without complaint, and to persevere there faithfully untill death. Blessed is he that hath there lived well, and ended happily. If thou wilt persevere in grace as thou oughtest, and profit in virtue, esteem thy self as a banished man, and a pilgrim upon earth. Thou must be contented for the love of Christ, to be esteemed as a fool in this world, if thou desire to lead a virtuous and perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, and shaving of the crown, do little profit ; but change of manners, and perfect mortification of passions, make a true religious man. He that seeketh any thing else but God, and the health of his soul, shall find nothing but tribulation and sorrow. Neither can he remain long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meanest place, and subject to all.

3. Thou camest to serve, not
to

to be served. Know that thou wast called to suffer and to labour, not to be idle, or to spend thy time in talk. Here in the school of Christ, men are proved as gold in the furnace. Here no man can stand unless he humble himself with his whole heart, for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

Consider the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection & religion shined, and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing which we do now in these dayes. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to them? The Saints and friends of Christ, served our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednesse, in labour and wearinesse, in watching and fasting, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. Oh

2 Oh how many and grievous tribulations suffered the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, and all the rest that endeavoured to follow the steps of Christ ! They hated their lives in this world, that they might posseſſe their souls in everlasting life. Oh how strait and poore a life led the holy Fathers in the wildernesſe ! How long and grievous tentations suffered they ! How often and huw grievously were they assaulted by their Ghostly enemie ! How fervent prayers offered they daily to God ! How rigorous abſtinance did they use ! How fervent zeal and care had they of their spirituall profit ! How strong and continuall a combate had they for the overcoming of vices ! How pure and upright intention kept they unto God ? In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to conrinuall prayer, althoſh when they laboured also, they ceaſed not from mental praier

3. They

3. They spent all their time with profit ; every houre seemed short for the service of God, and for the great sweetnesse they had in contemplation, they forgot the necessity of corporall refection : They renounced all riches, dignities honours, friends and kins-folks ; they desired to have nothing which appertained to the world ; they scarce took things necessarie for the sustenance of life ; they grieved to serve their bodies even in necessitie. They were poore in earthly things , but rich in grace & virtues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were replenished with grace , and spirituall comfort.

4. They were strangers in the world, but near & familiar friends to God. They seemed to themselves as nothing, and abject to this world; but they were precious and beloved in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humility, lived in simple obedience, walked

walked in charity and patience : and therefore they profited daily in spirit, and obtained great grace in Gods sight. They were given for an example and pattern of perfection in Gods Church, and their example should more stirre us up to a desire of our spirituall profit, then the number of the lukewarm and dissolute livers, draw us to the neglect thereof.

5. Oh how great was the fervour of all religious persons in the beginning of their holy Institution ? How great was their devotion to prayer ? How diligent emulation of virtue ? How exact discipline flourished ? How great reverence and obedience , under the rule of their Superiour, observed they in all things ? Their foot-steps yet remaining do testifie, that they were indeed holy and perfect men ; who fighting so valiantly, trode the world under their feet. Now he is greatly accounted of, that breaketh not the rule , and that

that can with patience endure that which he hath professed.

6. Oh the coldnesse and negligence of our time, that we so quickly decline from our first fervour, and are come to that passe, that very sloth and coldnesse of spirit, makes our own lives tedious unto us. Would to God the desire to profit in virtue, did not wholly sleep in thee, who hast often seen the holy examples of devout and religious souls.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Exercise of a good, and Religious person.

The life of a Religious person, ought to shine with all virtues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceived without: for God beholdeth the heart, whom we ought most highly to reverence wheresoever

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ever we are, and walk in purity
like Angels in his sight; and to re-
new daily our purposes, and stirre
up our selves to fervour, as though
this were the first day of our con-
version; and to say, Help me, my
God, in this my good purpose,
and in thy holy service; and grant
that I may now this day begin
perfectly, for that which I have
done hitherto is nothing.

2. According to our purpose,
shall be the successe of our profit:
and much diligence is necessary
to him that will profit much. And
if he that firmly purposeth, often
faileth, what shall he do that sel-
dome purposeth any thing, or with
little certainty? It may fall out
sundry wayes, that we leave off
our purpose: and it for light occa-
sions we omit our accustomed ex-
ercises, it seldom paileth without
some losse. The purpose of just
men, is rather grounded upon the
grace of God, then on their own
wisdome, in whom also they al-
wayes

wayes have confidence, in whatso-
ever they take in hand. For man
doth purpose, but God disposeth;
neither is the way of man in his
own hands.

3. If an accustomed exercise be
sometimes omitted for some work
of charity, or of intention to pro-
fit our neighbour, it may easily
afterward be recovered: but if it
be lightly left through inconsan-
cie or negligence, it is an offence,
and will prove hurtfull. Though
we endeavour what we can, yet shal
we fail in many things. But yet
we must alwaies purpose somthing
certain, especially against that
which most hinders us. We must
examine well, and order b: th our
exterior and interior actions;
for that both are expedient for our
progresse in virtue.

4. If thou canst not always
recollect thy self, yet do it some-
times and that at least once every
day, to wit, in the morning or
evening. In the morning make
thy

thy good purpose ; in the evening examine thy self what thou hast been that day in word, deed, or thought : for that in these often-times perhaps thou hast offended God and thy neighbour. Arm thy self with courage against the malicious attempts of thine enemie. Refrain gluttony, and thou shalt more easily bridle all the disorder-ed inclinations of the flesh. Never be altogether idle , but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating , or labouring some-thing of profit for the common good : but bodily exercises are to be discreetly used , and not to be undertaken equally of all.

5. Those things that be not common , are not to be done in the sight of all, for private things are best done in secret. But thou must beware thou neglect not that to which thou art bound by com-mon rule, and be ready in perfor-ming thy private devotions : but having fully and faithfully accom-plish-

plished all thy duties, and those things that were enjoyned thee, if thou hast further leisure, return to thy self as thy devotion desireth. All cannot use the same exercise, but one is more convenient for this person, another for that. According to the diversity of times also, divers exercises are fitting; for some sute better with festivall daies, others with daies of labour. We have need of one kind in temptations, and of others in time of peace, and quiet. We desire to think of other things, when we are sorrowfull, then we do when we are chearfull in our Lord.

6. When principall feasts draw near, good exercises are to be renewed, and the intercession of Saints more fervently to be implored. From feast to feast, we should make some good purpose, as though we were then to depart out of this world and to come to the everlasting feasts of heaven. And therefore we ought to prepare

C our

our selves carefully at holy times, and to live more devoutly, and to keep more exactly all things that we are to observe, as though shortly we were to receive reward of our labour at Gods hands.

7. And if it be differred, let us think that we were not well prepared, nor worthy as yet of so great glory, as shall be revealed in us at the time appointed : and let us labour to prepare our selves better for our departure. Blefled is that servant / saith S. Luke the Evangelist / whom when his Lord commeth, he shall find watching: verily I say unto you, he shall place him over all that he possesseth.

C H A P. X X.

Of the love of Solitude,
and Silence.

SEEK a fit time to attend to thy self, and often think of the benefits of God. Leave curious things. Read over such matters, as may

may cause rather compunction, then the labour of much study. If thou withdraw thy self from superfluous talk, and idle wandting about, as also from hearing of newes and tales, thou shalt find sufficient, and fit time to think of good things. The greatest Saints avoided the company of men as much as they could, and chose to live to God in secret.

2. One said: As often as I have been amongst men, I have returred lesse man. The same we find by experience when we talk long. It is easier to keep silence altogether, then not to exceed in words. It is easier for a man to keep home, then to demean himself as he ought in all things abroad. He therefore that desireth to attain to internall, and spirituall graces, ought with Jesus, to withdraw himself from the people. No man goeth safely abroad, but he that gladly keepeith home. No man securely governeth, but he

C 2 that

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that delighteth to live in subjection. No man securely commandeth, but he that hath learned ready to obey.

3. No man securely rejoyceth, unlesse he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience. And yet the security of Saints, was alwaies full of the fear of God. Neither were they lesse carefull and humble in themselves, for that they shined outwardly with grace, and great virtues. But the security of evil men riseth of pride and deceiveth them. Never promise to thy self security in this life, although thou seem to be a good Religious man, or devout Hermit.

4. Oftentimes those, who in the judgement of men were of better esteem, have been in greatest danger, by reason of their too much confidence. Wherefore it is more profitable to many, not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often assaulted; least they

they should be too secure, and so perhaps be lifted up in pride: least also they should too freely give themselves to outward comforts.

O, how good a conscience should he keep, that would never seek transitory joy: would never busie himself with the things of this world: and how great peace and quietnesse should he possesse, that would cut off all vain solicitude, and onely think of divine things, and such as are profitable for his soul, and place all his hope in God!

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comfort, unlesse he have diligently exercized himself in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of heart, retire thy self into some secret and solitary place, and exclude from thy mind the tumults, and unquietnesse of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be ye sorry. In thy Cell thou shalt find that which abroad thou shalt often loose. The Cell,

if thou continue in it, waxeth sweet, and if thou love not to stay in it, it becometh irksome. If in the beginning of thy conversion, thou accustometh thy self to remain in it, and keep it well, it will be afterwards unto thee a dear friend, and a most pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and quietnelle, a devout soul perfecteth her self, and learneth the secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findeth floods of tears, with which she may every night wash and cleanse her self, and be made so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the further off she liveth from all worldly disquiet. Who so therefore withdraweth himself from his acquaintance and friends, God with his holy Angels, will draw near unto him. It were better for a man to lie hidden, and have care of himself, then being careless of his soul, to work miracles in the world. It is commendable for a Religious person to go abroad

abroad seldome, to flie to be seen,
and to be unwilling to see men.

7. Why wilt thou see that, which
is not lawfull for thee to have?
The world passeth away, and all
its delights. The desires of our
sensuality, draw us to walk abroad,
but when the houre is past, what
bringest thou home, but a bur-
dened conscience, and distractred
thoughts? A joyfull going abroad,
bringeth often a sorrowfull com-
ming home; and a merry evening
makes a sad morning. So all car-
nall joy entreth gently, but in the
end it causeth remorse and destruc-
tion. What is elsewhere to be seen,
which thou canst not see here?
Here thou seest heaven and earth,
and all the elements, of which all
other things are made.

8. What is there any where to
be seen that can long continue un-
der the sunne? Thou thinkest per-
haps to satiate thy self, and have
thy fill; but thou shalt never at-
tain it. If it were possible for thee

to see all things created, present before thine eyes, what were it all but a vain and unprofitable sight? Lift up thine eyes to God in heaven, and ask pardon of thy sinnes and negligences. Leave vain things to the vain. Attend thou to that which God commandeth. Shut thy door upon thee, and call upon Jesus thy beloved. Be thou with him in thy Cell, for thou shalt not find so great peace in any other place. If thou hadst stayed within, and not given ear to idle news, thou hadst kept thy self better in good peace. But now that thou delightest sometimes to hear novelties, it is fit thou sufferest for it some trouble and disquiet of mind.

C H A P. X X I.

Of Compunction of heart.

IF thou wilt profit any thing keep thy self alwaies in the fear of God, and yield not too much scope to libertie. Contain all thy senses under

under the rule of discipline, and give not thy self to foolish mirth. Give thy self to compunction of heart, and thou shalt find devotion. Compunction discovereth much good, which with too much liberty is quickly lost. It is marvell that a man can ever perfectly rejoice in this life, if he consider his banishment, and weigh the many perils, wherewith his soul is environed. The levity of our mind, and the little care we have of our faults, makes us not to feel the sorrows of our soul.

2. But oftentimes we vainly laugh, when we have just cause to weep. There is neither true liberty, nor good mirth, but that which is in the fear of God, accompanied with a good conscience. Happy is he, that can avoid all cause of distraction, and draw himself to the union of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile, or burden his conscience. Fight manfully, one custome

overcomes another. If thou canst forbear to intermeddle with that which belongs to others, they will not hinder thee in that which thou hast to do.

3. Babie not thy self in matters which appertain to others: neither do thou meddle at all with the a-fairs of thy betters. Look first of all to thy self, and have a more especiall care to admonish thy self then whomsoever thou lovest best. If thou hast not the favour of men, be not therefore grieved: but let this seem unto thee a most just cause of grief, that thou lookest not to thy self with that care, which becometh the servant of God, and a devout religious person. It is oftentimes better and more secure, that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially such, as are agreeable to the inclination of our corrupt nature. But that we have none at all, or do seldom taste divine comforts, the fault is ours, that do not seek for compunction

punction of heart, nor do wholly forsake the vain comforts of this world.

4. Acknowledge thy self unworthy of divine comforts, and that thou hast deserved great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grievous and loathsome unto him. A good man findeth alwayes sufficient cause of tears and sorrow; for whether he consider himself, or weigh the estate of his neighbour, he knoweth that none liveth here without tribulation. And how much the more thoroughly he considereth himself: so much the more is his sorrow. Our sinnes and vices in which we are so plunged, that we can seldom contemplate the things of heaven, do minister unto us matter of most just sorrow and hearty contrition.

5. If thou didst think more diligently of thy death, then of living long, thou wouldest without doubt

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doubt be more carefull in the amendment of thy life. And if thou wouldest consider within thy self, the pains of hell, or of purgatorie, I am perswaded it would move thee to endure any labour or pain whatsoever in this world, and not to fear any kind of austerity. But because these things enter not to the heart, and we still love that which delighteth us, therefore we remain cold and void of spirituall vigour.

6. Oftentimes our want of spirit is the cause, that our wretched bodies do so quickly complain. Pray therefore with all humility to our Lord, that he will vouchsafe to give thee the spirit of contrition, and say with the Prophet. Feed me, O Lord, with the bread of tears, and give me to drink with tears in measure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the consideration of humane Misery.

Miserable thou art wheresoever thou be, and whithersoever thou turnest, if thou turnest not thy self to God. Why art thou troubled when things succeed not as thou wouldest, and desirest? Who is there that hath all things as he will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth. There is not any man in this world without some tribulation or affliction, though he be a King, or a Pope. Who thinkest thou then is in best case? Truly he that willingly suffereth something for God.

3. Many weak and feeble men say: Behold how well such a one lives, how rich, how powerfull, how beautifull, how great a man he is, but lift up thine eyes to the riches of heaven, and thou shalt see, that all temporall prosperity is as nothing, full of uncertainty, and which

which rather oppresleth then otherwise: for it is never had without solicitude & fear. The felicity of man, consisteth not in having abundance of temporall riches: a mean sufficeth. It is truly misery enough to live upon earth. How much more a man desireth to be spirituall, so much the more distastfull is this present life unto him: for he better perceiveth, and seeth more clearly the defects of humane corruption. To eat, to drink, to watch, to sleep, to labour, to repose, and to be subject to all other necessities of nature, is doubtlesse a great misery to a devout mind, that would gladly be free and delivered from all sinne.

4. The inward man is much oppressed with these corporall necessities, whilst he is in this world. And therefore the holy Prophet, prayeth with great devotion to be delivered from them, saying: Deliver me, O Lord, from my necessities. But wo be to them that know

know not their misery, and much more to them that love this miserable, and corruptible life. For some there be so dotingly affected unto it, that although with labour and begging, they scarce get bread to eat, yet if they might live here alwayes, they would care but little for the Kingdom of heaven.

5. O sensless creatures and infidels in heart, who lie buried so deep in earth, that they have no tast nor feeling, but of sensuall things ! But miserable wretches, they shall in the end feel, to their cost, how vile, and of no esteem was that which they loved. The Saints of God and the devout servants and friends of Christ, respected little what pleased their naturall inclinations, or what flourished in this life : but with their whole hopes and intentions, they sought after the riches of heaven. Their whole desire was carried up to those everlasting treasures, which are invisible ; least they might

might have been drawn to base affections, by the love of visible things. Loose not thy hope to profit in spirituall matters: there is yet time: the hour is not yet past.

6. Why wilt thou deferre thy good purpose? Rise up in this very instant, and begin, and say: Now is the time to work, the time to fight: now is it a fit time to amend my self. When any tribulation or affliction doth befall thee, then is the time to merit. Thou must passe through fire and water, before thou come to rest. Unlesse thou use violence to thy self, thou shalt not overcome thy evil inclinations. As long as we carry about with us this frail body of ours, we can never be without sinne, nor live without tediousnesse and grief. We would gladly enjoy quietnesse, and be delivered from all misery; but for that we have by sinne lost our innocency, we have together with it lost also our happiness. And therefore it behoveth us to have

have patience, and to expect the mercy of God, till this iniquity have an end, and that which is mortall be swallowed up of life.

7. O. how great is the frailty of man alwayes inclined to evil ? To day thou confessest thy sinnes, and to morrow thou committest again the same which thou didst confess, Now thou purposest to take heed, and within an hour thou doſt, as if thou hadſt made no purpose at all. We may therefore with great reason humble our ſelves, & never admit any thought of our own esteem, being ſo weak as we are, and ſubject to every change. Full ſoon (God knows) is that loſt by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

8. What will become of us in the end, who do ſo timely begin to wax cold ? Wo be unto us, if we will now give our ſelves to eaſe, as if all were already in peace and ſecurity ; when as yet there scarce appeareth

appeareth so much as any sign of true sanctity in our conversation. It were needfull that we were taught good manners again like Children, if so perhaps there might be some more hope of our amendment, and profit in spirit.

C H A P. X X I I.

Of the consideration of death.

THE hour of death will quickly overtake thee, and therefore look how thou livest. To day a man is living, and to morrow he doth not appear; and being once out of sight, he is also quickly out of mind. O dulnesse and hardness of mans heart, who thinketh onely on that he seeth, and foreseeth not that which is to come! Thou shouldest alwayes so order thy thoughts and actions, as if this very day thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldest not much fear death. It is better to avoid sinne, then

then to fly death. If thou be not prepared to day, how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow is uncertain, and whether thou shalt see it or no, thou knowest not.

2. What doth it avail us to live long, when we do so little amend? A long life doth not always make us better, nay rather it oftentimes heapeth upon us a greater load of sinnes. O that we had spent one day well in this world! Many do reckon the years of their conversion, but full slender oftentimes is the fruit of amendment. If it be a dreadfull thing to die, perhaps it will be more dangerous for thee to live long. Blessed is he, that hath always before his eyes the hour of his death, and disposeth himself dayly thereunto. If thou hast at any time seen a man die, think with thy self, that thou must one day passe the same way.

3. When it is morning, think that perhaps thou shalt not live untill

untill night ; and when evening comes, do not dare to promise unto thy self the next morning. Be alwayes ready and so order thy life , that death may never take thee unprepared Many die suddenly, for the sonne of man will come, when we least think of it. When that last hour shall come, thou wilt begin to think farre otherwise of thy life, and much lament, that thou hast been so slack and negligent.

4. O, how wise and happy is he, that now laboureth to be such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the hour of his death ? For the perfect contempt of the world, the fervent desire to profit in virtue, the love of discipline, the labour of pittance, the readinesse of obedience, the forsaking of our selves, and the bearing patiently of all adversity for the love of Christ, will give great confidence of a happy end. Thou maist do much good whiles thou art well ; but

but when thou art sick, what thou wilt be able to do, I know not. Few do grow better, and amend themselves with sicknesse ; as also they that wander much abroad, seldom become holy.

5. Trust, not upon thy friends or neighbours ; neither do thou put off to future times, the care of thy souls health : for thou shalt sooner be forgotten, then thou dost imagine. It is better now to provide in time, and do some good before thou goest, then to trust in the help of others, when thou art gone. If thou hast no care of thy self now when thou hast time, who will be carefull for thee hereafter ? The time which now thou hast is very precious. Now are the dayes of health. Now is the time acceptable. But alas, that thou spendest it so little to thy profit, in which thou mightest gain eternall life ? The time will come, when thou wilt desire one day, or one hour to amend, and I cannot assure

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sure thee, that thou shalt obtain it.

6. O my dearest brother, from how great danger maist thou deliver thy self? From how great fear maist thou be freed, if thou dost now live fearfull, and carefull of thy death? Labour to live in such sort, that at the houre of death, thou maist rather tejoyce then fear. Learn now to die to the world, that thou maist then begin to live with Christ. Learn now to contemne all earthly things, that thou maist then freely go to Christ. Chaftise now thy body with pennance, that thou mayst then have assured confidence.

7. Ah fool, why doſt thou think thou ſhalt live long, being not certain of ſo much as one day? How many have been deceived, and taken out of this world on a ſudden, when they leaſt expected it! How often haſt thou heard, how ſuch a one was ſuddenly ſlain, another was drowned, another falling from ſome high place brake his neck, another

other died at his meat, another when he was playing: one came to his end by fire, another by sword, another by plague, another died by the hands of thieves: so as death is the end of all, and the life of man passeth away like a shadow.

8. Who will remember thee, and who will pray for thee after thy death? Do now, beloved brother, do now what thou canst, for thou knowest not how soon thou shalt die, nor what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilst thou hast time, heap together eternall riches. Think on nothing but on the health of thy soul. Have care onely on that which belongeth to God. Make the Saints of God thy friends by honouring them, and imitating their virtues, that when thou departest this life, they may receive thee into their everlasting dwellings.

9. Esteem thy self as a pilgrim, and stranger upon earth, and as one to whom the affairs of this world

world do nothing appertain. Keep thy heart free, and lifted up to God, for thou hast not here any permanent citie. Send thither thy prayers daily with sighs and tears, that thy soul may deserve to passe with much happiness to our Lc after death.

C H A P. X X I V.

Of Judgement and the punishment of sinne.

IN all things consider the end, and how thou wilt be able to stand before that severe Judge, from whom nothing can be hidden, and is not appeased with gifts, nor admitteth excuses, but judgeth according to justice. Oh most wretched and foolish sinner, that fearest sometimes the countenance of an angry man, what answer wilt thou make to God, to whom all thy wickednesse is known? Why providest thou not for thy self against that rigorous day of judge-

judgement, in which no man can be excused or defended by another, but every one will be burden enough to himself? Now thy pains are profitable, thy tears acceptab', thy cries are heard, thy sorrow satisfieth for thy sinnes, and purgeth thy soul.

2. The patient man hath a great and healthfull purgatorie, who receiving injuries, grieveth more for others malice, then for his own wrongs; prayeth willingly for his adversaries, and from his heart forgiveth their offences; delayeth not to ask forgivenesse of whomsoever he hath offended; is sooner moved to compassion then to anger; useth often violence to himself, and laboureth with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better to purge our sinnes and vices now, then to reserve them for purgatory. Verily the inordinate love we bear to our selves deceiveth us.

3. What other thing shall that

D fire

fire feed on, but thy sinnes? How much the more thou sparest thy self now, and followest the desires of thy corrupt nature: so much the more grievously shalt thou be punished hereafter, and so much the more matter dost thou keep for that purging fire. In the self same wherin a man hath sinned, shall he be more grievously punished. There shall the slothfull be pricked forwards with burning goads. There shall the gluttons be tormented with insatiable hunger and thirst. There shall the lascivious and the lovers of pleasures; be covered over with burning pitch and brimstone. The envious like raving dogs, shall there howl for grief.

4. There is no vice that shall not have his proper torment. The proud shall be full of all shame and confusion. The covetous shall be in miserable want. One houre of pain there shall be more sharp, then a hundred yeares of most hard

hard penance here. There is no rest there, nor comfort for the damned. Here yet sometimes our labours cease, and we enjoy the comfort of our friends. Be now solicitous and sorrowfull for thy sinnes, that in the day of judgement thou mayst be secure in the company of the blessed souls: for then shall the just stand in great constancy against those that afflicted and oppressed them. Then shall he stand to judge, who now doth humbly submit himself to the judgement of men. Then shall the poore and humble have great confidence, and the proud shall be compassed about on all sides with fear.

5. Then will it appear, that he was wise in this world, who had here learned to be as a fool, and despised for Christ. Then shall affliction patiently suffered delight us, and iniquity shall stop her mouth. Then shall the devout rejoice, and the irreligious mourn.

D 2 Then

Then shall the chastised flesh more flourish, then if it had been alwayes nourished in delights. Then shall the poor garment shine, and the precious robes appear contemptible. Then shall the mean cottage be more commend-ed, then the sumptuous palace. Then will constant patience more avail us, then all earthly power. Then will simple obedience be more esteemed, then all worldly wisdome.

6. Then shall a good and pure conscience yield us more comfort, then the profound learning of Philosophy. Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more, then all the worldlings treasures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast prayed devoutly, then that thou hast fared daintily. Then wilt thou be more joyfull that thou hast observed silence, then that thou hast talked much. Then will good works appear of much more esteem, then fair words.

words. Then a strict life and hard pittance will be more pleasing, than all earthly delights. Accustome thy self now to suffer a little, that thou mayst then be delivered from more grievous pains. Prove here first what thou canst endure hereafter. If now thou canst bear so little, how wilt thou be able to endure everlasting torments? if now a little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell fire do hereafter? Assure thy self thou canst not have two Paradises. It is impossible for thee to enjoy delights here in this world, and reign hereafter with Christ in heaven

7. If thou hadst hitherto lived always in honours and delights, what would it avail thee, if thou shouldest presently die? All is vanity but to love God, and onely to serve him. And he that loveth God with his whole heart, needeth to fear neither death, punishment, judgement, nor hel, for per-

fect love gives secure access to God. But he that delighteth alwayes in sin, what wonder though he alwayes fear death, and be terrified with the thought of judgement? Yet it is good, that if love be not of force to withhold thee from sinne, that at least the fear of hel may restrain thee. And he that layeth aside the fear of God, can never continue long in good state, but falleth quickly into the snares of the devil.

CHAP. XXV.

*Of the fervent amendment of
our whole life.*

BE watchfull and diligent in the service of God, and often think with thy self wherefore thou camest, and why thou didst leave the world. Was it not that thou mightest live to God, and become a spirituall man? Go on therefore with courage, and thou shalt shortly receive the reward of thy la-

labours, and there shall be no more fear nor sorrow, in the confines of thy habitation. Thou must labour here a while, thou shalt afterward have great rest; yea, everlasting joy. If thou continuest faithfull and diligent in serving of God, do not doubt but God will be faithfull and liberal in giving thee reward. Thou oughtest to have a good hope of getting the victory, but thou must not make thy self assured thereof, least thou wax negligent, or be puffed up with pride.

2 When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once being oppressed with grief, prostrate himself in a Church in prayer before an Altar, and said within himself; Oh, if I knew that I should yet persevere? he presently heard as it were a voice from God, which said, What if thou diddest know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what

D 4 thou

thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be secure. And being here-with comforted and strengthened in mind, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and that noysome anxiety ceased; neither had he any mind to search curiously any further, to know what should befall him, but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect, and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.

3. Hope in our Lord, and do good, saith the Prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed in the riches thereof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that spirituall good, and the diligent amendment of their lives: the horrour of the difficulty, and the labour of the combate. But they above others profit most in virtue, that endeavour most to overcome those things which are grievous and contrary unto them. For there a man profiteth

eth more, and deserveth greater grace, where he more overcometh and mortifieth himself in spirit.

4. But all men have not alike to overcome and mortifie: yet he that is zealous & diligent, though he have more passions, shall profit more in virtue, then another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be lesse fervent in the pursuite of virtue. Two things chiefly help to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our selves violently from that to which nature is viciously inclined: and to labour earnestly for that virtue, which we most want. Be carefull also to avoid with great diligence, those things in thy self, which do most displease thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy soul out of every occasion and wheresoever thou be: so as if thou seest or hearest any good, stirre up thy self to the imitation thereof. But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, beware thou do not

the same. And if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye observeth others, so art thou also noted again by others. O, how sweet and comfortable a thing it is, to see the servants of Christ fervent and devout, endued with virtuous and decent manners! And on the contrary, how pittifull and grievous a thing it is, to see them that live in a disolute and disordered sort, not applying themselves to that, for which they were called! O, how great damage and great danger is it, to neglect the purposes of their vocation, and to busie themselves, in that which appertaineth not unto them, nor is committed to their care.

6. Be mindfull of the purpose thou hast made, and have alwayes before the eyes of thy soul the picture of thy Saviour crucified. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking upon the life of Christ, seeing thou hast so slackly endeav-

endeavoured to conform thy self unto him though thou haſt walked a long time in the way of the ſervice of God. A religious perſon that exerciſeth himſelf ſeriously, and devoutly in the moſt holy life, and paſſion of our Lord, ſhall there abundantly find whatſoever is neceſſary, and profitabla for him; neither ſhall he need to ſeek any thing elſewhere, but onely in Jeſus. O, if Jeſus crucified would come into our hearts, how quickly and fully ſhould we be inſtruſted in all truth.

7. A fervent religious perſon taketh, and beareth all well that is commanded him: but he that is negligent and cold, hath tribulation upon tribulation, and on all ſides is affliſted: for he is void of inward conſolation, and is forbiſten to ſeek extenſall comforts. A religious perſon that liveth not according to discipline, is in great danger of the ruine of his ſoul. He that ſecketh libertie and eaſe, ſhall

shall ever live in disquiet: for one thing or other will alwayes displease him.

8. How do so many other religious persons, who live under the strict rule of Monasticall discipline? They seldome go abroad, they live retiredly, they feed meanly, they are clothed courstly, they labour much, speak little, watch long, rise early, spend much time in prayer, read often, and keep themselves in all kind of discipline. Consider the Carthusians, Cistercians, and the Religious men and women of divers Orders, how they rise every night to sing praises unto God. And how unseemly then it is for thee, to be flouthfull in so holy a work, when as so great multitudes of religious persons, do begin to glorifie God.

9. O, that we had nothing else to do, but alwaies with our mouth & whole heart to praise our Lord God! O, that thou mightest never have need to eat, nor drink, nor

nor sleep, but mightest always praise God, and onely employ thy self in the exercises of spirit: thou shouldst then be much more happy, then now thou art, when for so many necessities, thou art constrained to serve thy bodie. Would God these necessities were not at all, but onely the spirituall refecti-
ons of the soul, which (alas) we taste of too seldome.

10. When a man cometh to that estate, that he seeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentment, and delight in God. Then shall he be contented with whatsoever doth befall him in this world. Then shall he neither rejoice in great matters, nor be sorrowfull for small, but with great integrity and confidence commit himself to God, who shall be unto him all in all: to whom nothing doth perish, nor die, but all things do live unto him, and serve him at a beck without delay.

11. Remember alwayes the end, and how that time lost never returns. Without care and diligence, thou shalt never get virtues. If thou beginnest to wax cold, it will be evil with thee; but if thou give thy self to fervour of spirit, thou shalt find much peace, and feel leffe labour, through the assistance of Gods grace, and love of virtue. The fervent and diligent man is ready, and prepared for all things. It is harder to resist vices and passions, then to toil in bodily labours. He that avoideth not small faults, by little and little, falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwayes rejoice in the evening, if thou spend the day profitably. Be watchfull over thy self, stirre up thy self, warn thy self, and whatsoever becomes of others, neglect not thy self. The greater violence thou usest against thy self, the more thou shalt profit.

The end of the first Book.

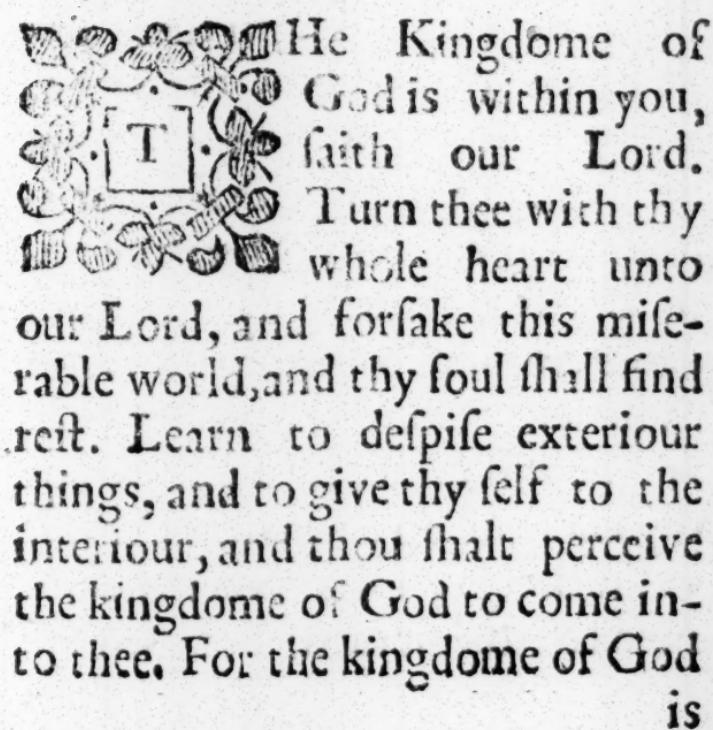
OF

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

The second Book.

CHAP. I.

Of spirituall conversation.


 The Kingdome of God is within you, saith our Lord. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto our Lord, and forsake this miserable world, and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise exteriour things, and to give thy self to the interiour, and thou shalt perceive the kingdome of God to come into thee. For the kingdome of God is

is peace, & joy in the holy Ghost, which is not given to the wicked. Christ will come into thee, and shew thee his divine comfort, if thou prepare for him a worthy mansion within thee. All his glory and beauty is within, and there he pleaseth himself. The inward man he often visits, and hath with him sweet discourses, pleasant comfort, much peace, wonderfull familiarity.

2. O faithfull soul, make ready thy heart for this bridegrome, that he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and dwell within thee. For he saith: If any love me he will keep my word, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him. Give therefore unto Christ a place in thy heart, and denie entrance to all others. When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and he will suffice thee. He will be thy faithfull and provident helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men. For men are soon

soon changed, and quickly deceived ; but Christ remaineth forever, and standeth firmly unto the end.

3. There is little trust to be put in a frail and mortall man, though he be profitable and dear unto thee : neither oughtest thou much to be grieved, if sometimes he crosse, and contradict thee. They that to day take thy part, to morrow may be against thee ; and so on the contrar, , they often turn like unto the wind. Put all thy trust in God, and fear and love him: He will answer for thee, and do in all things what is best. Thou hast not here a dwelling City, and wheresoever thou be, thou art a stranger and pilgrime : neither shalt thou ever have rest, unlesse thou be perfectly united unto Christ.

4. Why dost thou linger, and make delaies here, since this is not the place of thy rest ? In heaven ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly

earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. All things passe away, and thou together with them. Beware thou cleave not unto them, least thou be enthralled ; and so doest perish. Let thy thought be on the highest, and thy prayer directed unto Christ without ceasing. If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thy self in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his sacred body. For if thou fly devoutly unto his holy wounds, and to the precious markes of his passion, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation : neither wilt thou much care for being despised of men, and wilt easily bear the words of slanderous tongues.

5. Christ was also in the world despised, and in great necessity : forsaken by his acquaintance, and friends in the midst of slanders. Christ would suffer, and be contemned ; and darest thou complain ?

plain? Christ had adversaries and backbiters ; and wilt thou have all men thy friends and benefactours? For what shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen unto thee ? If thou wilt suffer no adversity, how wilt thou be the friend of Christ ? Suffer with Christ, and for Christ, if thou desire to reign with Christ.

6. If thou hadst once perfectly entred into the heart of Jesus and tasted a little of his burning love , then wouldest thou not weigh thy own commodity or discommodity, but wouldest rather rejoice at flanders , when they should chance to be cast upon thee : for the love of Jesus maketh a man to despise himself. A lover of Jesus, and of truth, and a true spirituall person, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turn himself unto God, and lift himself above himself in spirit, and with great joy of his soul rest in God.

7. He that judgeth of all things
as

as they are, and not as they are said ; and esteemed to be, is truly wise, and taught rather by God then men. He that can live spirituall, and make small reckoning of outward things : neither requirereth places, nor attendeth times for performing of devout exercises. A spirituall man quickly recollecteth himself : because he never yieldeth over himself wholly to outward things : He is not hindred by outward labour or busynesse, which may be necessary for the time, but as things fall out, so he frameth himself unto them. He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth little for the vain inventions, and perverse inclinations of men. So much is a man hindred and distracted, how much he draweth matters unto himself.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou hadst thy heart well purged, all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But many things

things displease, and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead unto thy self, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the heart of man, as the impure love to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate the things of heaven, and often receive internal joy.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

RESPECT not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeavour, and take care, that God may be for thee in every thing thou doest. Have a good conscience, and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord will help thee. He knoweth the time, and manner, how to deliver

deliver thee, and therefore thou oughtest to resign thy self unto him. It belongs to God to help, and to deliver from all shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himself for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, and quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him, God protecteth and delivereth the humble : he loveth and comforteth the humble : unto the humble man he inclineth himself : unto the humble he giveth great grace ; and after his humiliation, he raiseth him unto glory. Unto the humble he revealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inviteth him unto himself. The humble when he hath received confusion, is in peace, for that he resteth in God, and relieth not on the world. Do not think that thou hast profited any thing, unlesse

lesse thou esteem thy self inferiour
to all.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

First keep thy self in peace, and then maist thou pacifie others. A peaceable man doth more good, then he that is well learned. A passionate man turneth good into evil, and easilie believeth the worst. A good peaceable man turneth all things into good. He that is well in peace, is not suspitious of any, but he that is discontented, and troubled, is tossed with divers suspitions: he is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak; and omitteh that which were more expedient for him to do. He considereth what others are bound to do: and neglegeth that which he is bound to himself. First therefore have a carefull zeal over thy self and,

and then thou maist justly shew thy self zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse & colour thine own deeds, and thou wilt not receive the excuses of others. It were more meet, that thou didest accuse thy self, and excusedst thy brother. If thou wilt be born withall, bear also with another. Behold how far off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moved with indignation, but one-ly against himself. It is no great matter to converse with the good, and those that are of a gentle disposition, for that is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that agree with him. But to be able, to live peaceably with the unquiet, and perverse minds, or with the disorderly, or such as contradict us, is a great grace, and ver-ry commendable.

3. Some

3. Some there are, that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others. And there are some, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace: they are troublesome to others, but alwaies more troublesome to themselves. And others there are that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others unto peace. Our whole peace in this miserable life, consisteth rather in humble suffering, then in not feeling adversities. He that can best tell how to suffer, will best keep himself in peace. He is a conquerour of himself, a Lord of the world, friend of Christ, and heir of heaven.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure mind, and upright intention.

With two wings man is lifted up from earthly vanities, that is, with simplicity, and purity.

E. Simpli-

Simplicity ought to be in our intention. Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the soul in God. Purity apprehendeth and tasteth his sweetnesse. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and seek nothing else but the will of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internall liberty. If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a looking-glasie of life, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little and abject, that representeth not the goodnesse of God

2. If in thine own heart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldest be able to see and understand all things without any impediment. A pure heart penetrateth heaven, and picceth the depth of hell. Such as every one is inwardly: so he judgeth outwardly. If there be joy in the world, surely

a man of a pure heart possesseth it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an evil conscience feels it. As iron put into the fire leefeth his rust, and becometh bright like fire: so he that wholly turneth himself unto God, becometh fervent and is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold: then he is afraid of a small labour, and willingly receiveth externall comfort. But when he once beginneth to overcome himself perfectly, and to walk manfully in the way of God, then he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grievous unto him.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of ones self

WE cannot trust much to our selves, for that grace often-times and understanding is wanting.

ting. There is but little light in us, and that which we have, we quickly lose by our negligace, And oftentimes we do not perceive our own inward blindnesse. We often do evil, and excuse it worse. We are sometimes moved with passion, and we think it to be zeal. We reprehend small things in others, and passe over greater matters in our selues. We quickly feel, and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others : but we mind not what others suffer from us. He that doth well and deeply consider his own works, will find little cause to judge hardly another.

2. A spirituall man preferreth the care of himself, before all other cares. And he that diligently attendeth unto himself, doth seldome speak much of others. Thou wilt never be recollecte and devout, unlesse thou passe over other mens matters with silence, and look especially to thy self. If thou attend
w holly

wholly unto God & thy self, thou wilt be little moved with whatsoe-
ver thou seest abroad. Where art
thou, when thou art not with thy
self? And when thou hast run over
all, what hast thou profited, if thou
doest neglect thy self? If thou de-
sirest peace of mind and true uni-
on, thou must esteem little of all
earthly things, and look onely to
thy self

3. Thou shalt therefore profit
much, if thou keep thy self free
from all temporall cares. Thou
shalt hinder thy self greatly, if
thou esteem any thing of this
world. Let nothing be great unto
thee, nothing high, nothing grate-
full, nothing acceptable, but onely
God himself purely, or that which
is for God. Esteem all comfort
vain which thou receivest from
any creature. A soul that loveth
God, despiseth all things that be
inferior unto God. God alone is
everlasting, and of infinite great-
nesse filling all creatures: the com-

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fort of the soul, and the true joy
of the heart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the comfort of a good Conscience.

THE glory of a good man, is the testimonie of a good conscience. Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy. A good conscience is able to bear much, and is cheerfull in adversities. An evil conscience is alwaies fearfull and unquiet. Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart doth not reprehend thee. Do thou never rejoice, but when thou hast done well. Sinners have never true mirth, nor feel inward peace: because there is no peace to the impious, saith our Lord. And if they should say: We are in peace, no evil shall fall upon us, and who shall dare to hurt us? believe them not: for upon a sudden will arise the wrath of God, and their deeds

deeds shall be turned into nothing and their conceiſs shall perish.

2. To glory in tribulation, is no hard thing for him that loveth, for to glory so, is to glory in the Croſſe of our Lord. That glory is ſhort, which is given and received from men. Sorrow alwaies accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their conſciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladneſſe of the juſt is of God, and in God: and their joy is of the truth. He that diſieth true and everlasting glory, careth not for that which paſſeth away with time. And he that ſeeketh temporall glory, or contemneth it not from his heart, ſhewes himſelf but little to etteem of the glory of heaven. He enjoyeth great tranquillity and peace of mind, that careth neither for the praises, nor diſpraises of men.

3. He will easily be content and pacified, whose conſcience is

pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him : nor the more abject, though thou dispraise him. What thou art, that thou art : neither can it thou be truly said to be greater, then what thou art in the sight of God. If thou consider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men say of thee. Man seeth in the face, but God looketh into the heart. Man considereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intentions. To do alwaies well, and to esteem little of himself, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a sign of great purity, and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward witnessie for himself, doth shew that he hath wholly committed himself unto God. For not he, that commendeth himself, the same is approved (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walk inwardly with God, and not to be

be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spirituall man.

C H A P. VII.

*Of the love of Jesus above
all things.*

BLESSED is he that understandeth what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus. Thou oughtest to leave thy beloved, for thy beloved; for that Jesus will be beloved alone above all things. The love of things created is deceitfull and unconstant: the love of Jesus is faithfull and constant. He that cleaveth unto creatures, shall fall with that which is subject to fall. He that embraceth Jesus shall stand firmly for ever. Love him, and keep him for thy friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be left of men, whether thou wilt or no.

E 5 2, Live

2. Live and die with Jesus, and commit thy self unto his cruse, who when all fail, can alone help thee. Thy beloved is of that nature, that he will none of that which appertaineth to others: but will have thy heart alone, and sit like a King in his own throne. If thou couldst purge thy self perfectly of all creatures, Jesus would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoever thou puttest in men out of Jesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not, nor relie upon a reed full of wind: for that all flesh is as hay, and all the glorie thereof shall wither away as the flower of the field.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceived if thou look onely to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou seekest thy comfort and profit, thou shalt often feel losse. If thou seekest Jesus in all things, thou shalt surely find Jesus: But if thou seekest thy self, thou shalt also find thy self, but to thy

thy own harm. For man doth more hurt himself if he seek not Jesus, then the whole world and all his adversaries could annoy him.

C H A P. VIII.

*Of familiar conversation with
Jesus.*

WHEN Jesus is present all is well, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Jesus is absent, everything is hard. When Jesus speaketh not inwardly unto us, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Jesus speak but one word, we feel much consolation. Didn't Mary Magdalene presently rise from the place where she wept, when Martha said unto her: Thy Master is here and calleth thee? Happy is the house, when Jesus calleth from tears of spirituall joy. How dry and hard art thou without Jesus? How foolish and vain, if thou desire any thing out

of

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of Jesus? Is not this a greater losse, then if thou shouldest loose the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without Jesus? To be without Jesus, is a grievous hell; and to be with Jesus is a sweet Paradise. If Jesus be with thee, no enemie can hurt thee. He that fudeth Jesus, findeth a good treasure; yea, a good above all goods. And he that loseth Jesus, loseth too much, and more then the whole world. He is most poor that liveth without Jesus, and he most rich that is well with Jesus.

3. It is a great skill to know how to converse with Jesus; and a great wisdom to know how to keep Jesus. Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stay with thee. Thou mayst drive away Jesus and loose his grace, if thou givest thy self to outward things. And if thou shouldest drive him from thee, and loose him,

him, unto whom wilt thou flie, and what friend wilt thou then seek? Without a friend, thou canst not well live; and if Jesus be not above all a friend unto thee, thou shalt be too too sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest therefore foolishly, if thou dost trust or rejoice in any other. It is better for thee to have all the world against thee, then Jesus offended with thee. Amongst all things therefore that be dear unto thee, let Jesus alone be thy chiefest beloved.

4. Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for himself. Jesus Christ alone is especially to be beloved, who alone is found to be good, and faithfull above all friends. For him, and in him, let as well friends as foes be dear unto thee: and all these are to be prayed for, that all may know and love him. Never desire to be singularly commended or beloved, for that appertaineth onely unto God, who hath none like unto him.

himself. Neither do thou desire that the heart of any should be set on thee, nor do thou set thy heart on the love of any: but let Jesus be in thee, and in every virtuous and good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy heart with any creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, and carry a pure heart to God, if thou wilt consider, and prove, and see how sweet our Lord is. And truly unless thou be prevented and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain to that happiness, to forsake and cast away all, that thou alone mayst be united to him alone. For when the grace of God cometh unto a man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard unto him. And when it goeth away, he is poore and weak, and as it were left unto the will of whomsoever will afflict him. In this thou oughtest not to be dejected, nor despair, but to resigne thy self with all indifferencie unto the will

will of God, and to bear all things that befall thee for the glory of Christ: for after winter followeth summer, after night cometh day, and after a tempest fair weather.

C H A P. I X.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise humane comfort, when we have divine. It is much and very much to be able to want both humane and divine comfort: and for the honour and glory of God, to be willing to endure desolation of heart, and to seek himself in nothing, nor to regard his own merit. What great matter is it, if thou be chearfull and devout at the coming of heavenly grace? This hour is wished for of all men. He rideth easily, whom the grace of God carrieth. And whar marvell if he feel not his burthen, who is born up by the Almigh-
tie,

tie, and lead by the greatest guide?

2. We are alwayes willing to have something for our comfort; and a man doth hardly put off, and forsake himself. The holy martyr S. Laurence overcame the world with his Prelate, because he despised whatsoever seemed delightsome in the world; and for the love of Christ, he patiently suffered the high Priest of God S. Syxtus to be taken from him; whom he most loved. He overcame therefore the love of man by the love of the Creator; and he rather chose the divine pleasure, then humane comfort. See thou also learn to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloved friend, for the love of God. Be not grieved when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length must be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long, and with a constant mind, before he get the

the victory, and be able to place his whole heart in God. When a man confideth in himself, he easily slideth unto humane comforts. But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent follower of virtue, giveth not himself to such solace, nor seeketh sensible sweetnesse, but rather forcible exercises, and to sustain hard labours for Christ.

4. When therefore spirituall comfort is given thee from God, receive it thankfully, but know that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine. Be not puffed up, joy not too much, neither do thou presume vainly: but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and fearfull in all thy actions: for that houre will passe away, and temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken from thee, despair not presently; but with humilitie and patience, attend the heavenly visitation: for God is able again to give thee greater consolation. This is not new,

new, nor strange unto them, that have experience in the way of God: for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was often-times such kind of alteration.

5. For which cause one when he had grace, said: I said in my plenty, I will not be moved everlastingly. But when this was gone from him, he addeth what he found in himself, saying: Thou turnedst thy face from me, and I became troubled. Yet doth he not despair in the middest of these changes, but more earnestly prayeth unto our Lord, and saith: Unto thee (O Lord) I will cry, and I will pray unto my God. Lastly he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying: Our Lord hath heard me, and taken pitty on me: our Lord is become my helper. But wherein? Thou hast turned (saith he) my sorrow into joy, and thou hast compassed me about with gladnesse. If great Saints have been

so dealt withall, we that are poor and weak, ought not to despair, if we be sometimes fervent, & sometimes cold; for thy spirit cometh and goeth, according to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed Job saith: Thou visitest him early in the morning, and suddenly thou provest him.

6. VVhereupon therefo e can I hope, or wherein ought I to trust, but in the great mercie of God a-lone, and in the onely hope of heavenly grace? For whether I enjoy the presence of good men, or devout brethren, or faithfull friends, or holy books, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymns, all these help little, and have little savour, when grace forsaketh me, and I remain left in my own poverty. At such a time there is no better remedie then patience, and the resigning of my self unto the will of God.

7. I never found any so religious and devout, that hath not had some-

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sometimes a withdrawing of grace,
or felt not a decrease of fervour.
There was never Saint so highly
rapt, and illuminated, who first
or last, was not tempted. For he
is not worthie of the high contem-
plation of God, who hath not been
exercised with some tribulation for
Gods sake. For temptation going
before, is wont to be a signe of en-
suing comfort. And unto those
that are proved by temptations,
heavenly comfort is promised. He
that shall overcome, saith he, I will
give him to eat of the wood of
life.

8. But divine comfort is given,
that a man may be stronger to
bear adversities. There followeth
also temptation, least we should
wax proud of that good. The de-
vil sleepeth not; neither is our flesh
as yet dead: therefore cease not to
prepare thy self to the battell: for
on thy right hand, and on the left,
are enemies that never rest.

C H A P.

C H A P. X.

*Of thankfulness for the
Grace of God.*

WHY seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labour? Dispose thy self to patience, rather then to comforts: and to the bearing of the Crosse, rather then to gladnesse. What secular person is there, that would not willingly receive spirituall joy and comfort, if he could alwayes have it? Spirituall comforts exceed all the delights of the world, and all the pleasures of the flesh. All worldly delights are either vain or unclean: but spirituall delights are onely pleasant and honest, produced by virtues, and infused by God into pure hearts. But no man can alwayes enjoy these divine comforts, according to his desire: For the time of temptation is not long away.

2. False freedome of mind, and great trust of our selves, is very contra-

118 *The following Book I.*
contrary to heavenly visitations. God doth well in giving grace: but man doth evil in not returning it again wholly unto God with thanksgiving. And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in us, because we are ungratefull to the giver: and return them not wholly to the head-fountain. For grace is ever due to him that is thankfull, and from the proud shall be taken that which is wont to be given to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction: nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For all that is high, is not holy, nor all that is sweet, good: nor every desire, pure: nor every thing that is dear unto us, is gratefull to God. I do willingly accept of that grace, whereby I may ever become more humble and fairfull, and be made more ready and able to forsake my self. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the with-

withdrawing thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himself: but will rather acknowledge himself poor, and naked. Give unto God, that which is Gods, and ascribe unto thy self, that which is thine own: that is, give thanks unto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but onely sinne, and the punishment due thereunto.

4. Content thy self, and desire always the meanest and lowest things, and the highest shall be given thee: for the highest, stand not without the lowest. The highest Saints before God, are the least in their own judgements. And how much the more glorious, so much the humbler within themselves. Those that are full of truth, and heavenly glory, are not desirous of the vain glory of this world. Those that are firmly settled and grounded in God, can no way be proud. And they that ascribe all unto God, what good so ever

ever they have received, seek not glory one of another: but would have that glory which is from God alone, and desire above all things to praise God in himself, and in all the Saints, and alwayes tend unto the same.

5. Be therefore gratefull for the least gift, and thou shalt be made worthy to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee also as the greatest: and the most contemptible as an especiall gift. If thou consider the worth of the giver, no gift will seem little, or of mean esteem. For it is not little that is given by the soveraign Majesty of God. Yea if he should give punishment and stripes, it ought to be gratefull, for that he doth is alwaves for our salvation, whatsoever he permitteth to happen unto us. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankfull for the grace given, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary & humble, least he lose it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

*How few the lovers of the
Crosse of Christ are.*

Jesus hath now many lovers of his heavenly kingdome, but few bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoice with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the Chalice of his passion. Many reverence his miracles, few follow the ignominy of his Crosse. Many love Jesus, as long as adversity happen not. Many praise and blesse him, as long as they receive any comfort from him. But if Jesus hide himself, and leave them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much dejection of mind.

2. But they that love Jesus for
F Jesus,

Jesus, and not for some comfort of their own, blesse him in all tribulation and anguish of heart, as well as in the greatest comfort. And although he should never give them comfort they notwithstanding would ever praise him, and always give him thanks.

3. O how powerfull is the pure love of Jesus, which is mixed with no self-love nor proper interest: Are they not all to be called hirelings, that ever seek comforts? Do they not shew themselves, to be rather lovers of themselves, then of Christ, that always think of their commodity and gain? Where may one be found that will serve God, without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so spirituall, that is free from the love of all earthly things. For where is any that is indeed poor in spirit, and free from all affection of creatures? for hence, and from the end of the world is his price. If a man should give all his wealth, yet is it nothing.

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nothing. And if he should do great penance, yet is it little. And if he should attain to all knowledge; he is yet farre off. And if he should have great virtue, and very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting: to wit, one thing which is most necessary for him. What is that? That leaving all, he forsake himself, and go perfectly from himself, and retain nothing of self-love. And when he hath done all that he knoweth to be done, let him think that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much, which might be much esteemed, but according to truth, let him affirm himself to be an unprofitable servant, as our Saviour hath said: When you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants. They may be truly poor in spirit and naked, and say with the Prophet: I am alone and poor: yet no man richer, no

man more powerfull, no man more free then he that can leave himself and all things, and put himself in the meanest and lowest place.

CHAP. XII.

*Of the high-way of the
holy Crosse.*

Unto many seemeth hard this speech: Denie thy selfe take up thy Crosse; and follow Jesu. But it will be much harder, to hear that last word: Get ye away from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire. For they that now willingly hear and follow the word of the Crosse, shall not then fear to hear the sentence of everlasting damnation. This signe of the Crosse shall be in heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgement. Then all the servants of the Crosse, who in their life-time conformed themselves unto Christ crucified, shall draw near unto our Lord with great confidence.

2. Why

2. Why therefore fearest thou to take up the Crosse, which leadeth thee to a kingdome? In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection against our enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heavenly sweetnesse, in the Crosse is strength of mind, in the Crosse is joy o the spirit, in the Crosse is the height of virtue, in the Crosse is the perfection of sanctitie. There is no health of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life, but in the Crosse. Take up therefore thy Crosse and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He is gone before, bearing his Crosse, and is dead for thee on the Crosse, that thou maist also bear thy Crosse, and desire to die on the Crosse with him. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt also live with him. And if thou be his companion in pain, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

3. Behold in the Crosse all

F 3 doth

doth consist, and all lieth in ending our life upon it: for there is no other way unto life, and unto true inward peace, but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt: thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgement: yet thou shalt ever find, that of necessity thou must suffer some-what, either willingly or against thy will, so as thou shalt never fully avoid the Crosse. For either thou shalt feel pain in thy body, or in thy soul thou shalt suffer tribulation of spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours, and which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irksome to thy self, neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort: but so long as pleaseth God, thou oughtest to bear

bear it. For God will have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou submit thy self wholly to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath so lively a feeling of the passion of Christ, as he who hath chanced to suffer the like. The Crosse therefore is alwayes ready, and every where attendeth thee. Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou fliest, for wheresoever thou goest, thou carriest thy self with thee, and shalt ever find thy self both above and below, without and within: which way soever thou dost turn thec, alwayes thou shalt find the Crosse: and every where of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and deserve an everlasting Crown.

5. If thou bear the Crosse willingly, it will bear thee, and lead thee to thy desired end: to wit, where there shall be an end of suffering, though here there shall not.

If thou bear it unwillingly, thou makest for thy self a new burthen, and increasest thy load, & yet notwithstanding thou must bear it. If thou cast away one Crosse, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a more heavy.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that, which no man could ever avoid? Which of the Saints in the world was without Crosses, and tribulations? Verily Jesus Christ our Lord was never one hour without pain of suffering, so long as he lived. Christ (saith he) ought to suffer, and rise again from death, and so to enter into his glory: and how dost thou seek any other way then this high way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

7. The whole life of Christ was a Crosse and Martyrdome, and doest thou seek rest and joy? Thou art deceived if thou seekest any other thing then to suffer tribulation: for this whole mortall life is full of miseries, and environed

roned on every side with Crosles. And how much the more one hath profited in spirit, so much the heavier ctofles he oftentimes findeth: for the love he beareth to God, increaseth the grief which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though so many wayes afflicted, is not without the remedy of spirituall consolation, for the great good which he percciveth to grow unto him, by the bearing of his crofle. For whilst he willingly putteth himself under it, all the burthen of tribulation is turned into the confidence of divine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. And sometimes he is so comforted with the desire of tribulation and aduersitie, for the love of conforming himself to the Crofle of Christ, that he would not wish at any time, to be without sorrow and tribulation,

because he believeth, that so much the more gratefull he shall be unto God, how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a work of humane virtue, but it is the grace of Christ, that can and doth so much in frail flesh, that what naturally it alwaies abhorreth and flyeth, that by fervour of spirit it taketh hold on and loveth.

9. It is not according to mans inclination to bear the crosse, to love the crosse, to chastise and subdue the body, to flie honours, to suffer contumelies with a joyfull heart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to bear all adversities and damages, and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou considerest thy self, thou shalt be able to perform no such matter of thy self. But if thou trustest in our Lord, strength shall be given thec from heaven, and the world and flesh shall be made subject to thy command. Neither shalt thou fear thy enemy the devil, if thou

be armed with faith, and signed with the crosse of Christ.

10 Resolve therefore with thy self, like a good and faithfull servant of Christ, to bear manfully the crosse of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy love. Prepare thy self to bear many adversities and divers kinds of troubles in this miserable life : for so it will be with thee wheresoever thou be, and so surely thou wilt find it wheresoever thou hide thy self. So it must be, & there is no remedy or means to avoid tribulation and sorrow, but to bear them. Drink of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt be his friend, and desirest to have part with him. Leave the desire of comforts to God, let him do therein as shall best please him. Set thou thy heart upon the suffering of tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts, for that the passions of this life are not condigne to future glory , although thou alone couldst suffer them all.

11, When

11. When thou shalt come to this estate, that tribulation shall seem sweet and pleasant unto thee for Christ; then thou maist think it is well with thee, for thou hast found a Paradise upon earth. As long as it is grievous unto thee to suffer, and that thou desirest to flee it, so long shalt thou be ill at ease: and the tribulation thou fliest will follow thee every where.

12. If thou settlest thy self to that thou oughtest, to wit, to suffer and to die to thy self, it will quickly be betrer with thee, and thou shalt find peace. Although thou shouldst have been rapt even unto the third heaven with Paul, thou art not for this assured, that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. I (saith Jesus) will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name. It resteth therefore that thou suffer, if thou wilt love Jesus; and perpetually serve him.

13. Oh would to God thou wert worthy to suffer something for

for Jesus ! how great glory would it be unto thee, what joy to all the Saints of God , how great edification also to thy neighbour ! For all do commend patience, though few desire to suffer. With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ since many suffer far greater things for the love of the world.

14. Know for certain, that thou ou- liftest to lead a dying life. And how much the more every one di- eth to himself ; so much the more doth he begin to live to God. **No man** is fit to attain unto heavenly things, unlesle he submit himself to the bearing of adversities for Christ. Nothing is more grate- ful unto God, nothing more whol- some to thee in this world, then to suffer willingly for Christ. And if it were in thy choice , thou shouldest rather wish to suffer ad- versities for Christ, then to enjoy the delight of many comforts: be- cause by these means thou shouldest be

be more like unto Christ, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our merit and the perfection of our estate, consisteth not in much sweetnesse and comforts, but rather in suffering great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had been any better thing, and more profitable to the health of man then suffering, surely Christ would have shewed it by word and example. But he plainly exhorted all the disciples that followed him, and all that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Crosse; and saith, If any man will come after me, let him denie himself, and take up his crosse, and follow me: So as when we have read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion: That by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdome of God.

*The end of the second
Book.*

OF

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The third Book.

CHAP. I.

*Of the inward speech of Christ
unto a faitfull soul.*

Will heare what our Lord God will speak in me. Blessed is the soul that heareth our Lord speaking in her, and receiveth from his mouth the word of comfort. Blessed are those ears that receive the sound of the voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed indeed are those ears that barken not to the voice

voice which soundeth outwardly, but unto truth which teacheth inwardly. Blessed are the eyes, that being shut up to outward things, are attentive to those things that are internall. Blessed are they that enter into the inward things, and endeavour to prepare themselves more and more by daily exercises to the attaining of heavenly secrets. Blessed be they that delight to attend to the service of God; and cast from them all impediments of this world.

2. Consider these things, my soul, and shut up the doore of thy sensuall desires: that thou mayst heare what thy Lord God speaks in thee. Thus saith thy beloved; I am thy safetie, thy peace, and thy life. Keep thy self with me, and thou shalt find peace. Forsake all transitory things, and seek those that be everlasting. What are temporall things, but deceiving snares? and what do all creatures avail thee, if thou be forsa-

forsaken by the Creatour? Forsake therefore all earthly things, and labour to please thy Creatour, and be faithfull unto him, that thou maist attain unto true happiness.

CHAP. II.

That truþ speaketh inwardly without noise of Words.

Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. I am thy servant grant me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Stir up my heart to hear the words of thy mouth. Let thy speach descend as the dew into my soul. The children of Israel in times past said vnto Moses: Speak thou unto us, and we shall hear thee: Let not our Lord speak unto us, least perhaps we die. Not so Lord, not so, I beseech thee, but rather with the Prophet Samuel. I humbly and earnestly intreat: speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. Let not Moses speak

speak unto me, nor any of the Prophets, but thou rather speak, my Lord God, the inspirer, and enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them, canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee, can profit nothing,

2. They can pronounce words, but they give not spirit. They speak marvelous well, but if thou hold thy peace, they inflame not the heart. They deliver the letters, but thou openest the sense. They bring forth mysteries, but thou disclosest the understanding of sealed things. They declare thy commandements, but thou helpest to fulfill them. They shew the way, but thou givest strength to walk in it. They work onely exteriorly, but thou instructest and enlightnest the hearts. They water outwardly, but thou givest fruitfulness. They sound forth words, but thou givest understanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therefore Moses speak

speak unto me, but thou my Lord God, the everlasting truth, least perhaps I should die, and become without fruit, if I be warned outwardly onely, and not inflamed within: least the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed, should increase my judgement. Speak therefore Lord, for thy servant heareth, for thou hast the words of everlasting life. Speak unto me to the comfort of my soul, and to the amendment of my whole life: and to thy praise and glory, and everlasting honour.

C H A P. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

SON hear my words, words of great comfort, excelling all the knowledge of the Philosophers and wise men of this world. My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed

140 *The following* Book III.
weighed by the understanding of man. They are not to be drawn to vain liking, but to be heard with silence, and to be received with all humility and great affection. And I said : Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law, that thou maist give him quietnesse from evil daies, and that he be not destroyed upon earth.

2. I (saith our Lord) have taught the Prophets from the beginning, and cease not continually to speach to every one : but many are deafe, and give no ear to my speach. The greater number do more willingly listen to the world, then to God : and follow sooner the desires of their flesh, then the will of God. The world promiseth temporall and small things, and is served with great diligence : I promise most high and eternall things, and the hearts of men are nothing moved with it. Who is he that serveth and obeyeth me with

with equal care to that with which the world, and the Lords thereof are served? Blush Sidon, saith the sea. And if thou ask the cause, hear wherefore. For a little pre-bend, a long jorney is undertaken: for everlasting life many will scarce once lift a foot from the ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily: for a penny sometimes there is great contention: for a vain thing and slight promise, men cease not to toil day and night.

3. But alas for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loath to take the least pains. Blush therefore slothfull and complaining servant, that they are found more ready to destruction, then thou to life. They rejoice more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are sometimes frustrated of their hope: but my promise deceiveth none, nor sendeth him away empty

empty that trusteth in me. I will give that which I have promised. I will fulfill that which I have said, but to him that remains faithfull in my love to the end, I am the reward of all good, and do try my devout servants in forcible proofs.

4. Write my words in thy heart, and think diligently of them: for they will be necessary in time of temptation. What thou understandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day of visitation. I am wont to visit my elect two severall waies: to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I daily read two lessons unto them, one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of virtues. He that hath my words and despiseth them, hath within himself that shall judge him at the last day.

*A Prayer to implore the grace
of devotion.*

5. Lord my God, thou art all that I can desire. Who am I, that dare speak unto thee? I am thy poorest servant, and a most vile worm: much more poore and contemptible, then I can or dare expresse. Remember Lord that I am nothing, have nothing and can do nothing. Thou alone art good, just, and holy; thou canst do all things, performest all things, leaving onely a sinner void of all good. Call to mind thy mercies, and fill my heart with thy grace, who wilt not that thy works be void.

6. How can I support my self in this miserable life, unlesse thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turn not thy face from me: delay not thy visitation; draw not away thy comfort, least my soul become as earth without water unto thee. Lord teach me to fulfill thy will; teach me to live worthily and

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humbly in thy sight ; for thou art my wisdome, thou doſt perfectly know me, and dideft know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.

CHAP. IV.

That we ought to live in truth and humilitie in the sight of God.

SON, walk in my sight in sinceri-
ty and truth ; and ever seek
me in plainnesse of heart. He that
walketh in my sight in truth, shall
be defended from evil incursions,
and truth shall deliver him from
seducers, and from the detrac-
tions of the wicked. If truth shall
have delivered thee, thou shalt be
truly free, and shalt not care for
vain speeches of men. Lord it is
true, according as thou ſaift, ſo I
beseech thee let it be done with
me, and keep me, and bring me
to a happy end. Let thy truth
teach me, and let it deliver me
from all evil affection and inordi-
nate

nate love, and I shall walk with thee in great freedome of heart.

2. I will teach thee (saith the Truth) those things that are right and pleasing in my sight. Think of thy sinnes with great sorrow and grief, and never esteem thy self any thing for thy good works. Thou art in very deed a sinner, and subject to many passions. Of thy self thou alwayes tendest to nothing, and art quickly cast down and overcome; quickly troubled, quickly dissolved. Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to humble, and despise thy self: for thou art much weaker then thou art able to comprehend.

3. And therefore let nothing seem much unto thee, whatsoever thou doft. Let nothing seem great, nothing precious and wonderfull, nothing worthy of estimation, nothing high, nothing truly commendable and to be desired, but

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that which is everlasting. Let the eternall Truth above all things please thee. Let thy own great unworthynesse alwayes displease thee. Fear nothing, blame and scie nothing so much as thy sinnes and vices : which ought to displease thee more , then the losse of any thing whatsoever. Some walk not sincerely in my sight , but led by a certain curiositie and pride, will know my secrets , and understand the high mysteries of God, neglecting themselves and their own salvation. These oftentimes (for that I resist them) do fall into great tentations and sinnes, for their pride and curiositie.

4. Fear the judgements of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty: but discusse not the works of the Highest. Search thine own iniquities, in how much thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carrie their devotion onely in books, some in pictures, some in outward signes and

and figures, some have me in their mouths, but little in their hearts. There are others that being illuminated in their understanding, and purged in their affection, do alwayes aspire with an earnest mind to everlasting happinesse: and are unwilling to hear of the things of this world, and do serve the necessities of nature with grief, and these perceive what the Spirit of Truth speaketh in them, because it teacheth them to despise earthly, and love heavenly things: to neglect the world, and day and night to desire heaven,

CHAP. V.

*Of the wonderfull effect of
divine grace.*

I Praise thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poore and wretched creature. O Father of

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mercies and God of all comfort, thanks be unto thee, who sometimes with thy comfort refreshest me, unworthy of all comfort. I ever blesse and glorifie thee with thy onely begotten Sonne, and the holy Ghost for all worlds. O God my Lord, the holy lover of my soul, when thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoice. Thou art my glory, and the exultation of my heart. Thou art my hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation

2. But for that I am yet weak in love and imperfect in virtue, I have need to be comforted by thee; visit me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliver me from evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections, that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persevere.

3. Love is a great matter, in verity truth a great good, which alone

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maketh every thing that is heavie, light; and beareth equally unequal burthens: For it carrieth a burthen without a burthen, & makes every thing that is bitter, sweet and delightfome. The noble love of Jesus, enforceth man to work great things, and stirreth him up to desire alwayes the most perfect. Love will be aloft, and not kept down with any base things. Love will be free from all worldly affection, to the end his inward sight be not cbscured, that he be not entangled with the desire of any transitorie gain, or troubled with the want thereof. Nothing is sweeter then love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven or in earth: for that love hath his beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God above all creatures.

4. He that loveth, flieth, runneth, and rejoyceth; he is free and

G 3 not

not held in. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all; for that he resteth in one Highest above all, from which all good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods unto the giver. Love oftentimes knoweth no measure, but inflameth above all measure. Love feeleth no burthen, weighth no pains, desireth above its strength, complaineth not of impossibility, or that it thinketh all things lawfull and possible. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to effect; whereas he that doth not love, fainteth and can do nothing.

5. Love alwayes watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not; being wearied, is not tired; straitned, is not pressed; frightened, is not troubled; but like a lively flame, and burning torch, breaketh upwards, and passeth through all with great securitie. If any one loveth, he know-

knoweth what this voice crieth. A loud cry in the ears of God is the burning love of the soul, which saith, My God, my love, thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine.

6. Enlarge me in love, that my heart may taste how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved, and swimme in thy love. Let me be possessed by love, mourning above my self, with excessive fervour and admiration. Let me sing the song of love, let me follow thee on high my beloved, let my soul faint in thy praises rejoicing with love. Let me love thee more then my self, and not my self but for thee, and all in thee that truly love thee, as the law of love commandeth which shineth in thee.

7. Love is swift, sincere, pious, sweet, and delightfull; strong, patient, faithfull, prudent, suffering, full of courage, and never seeking it self. For where one seeketh himself, there he falleth from love.

Love is circumspect, humble, and upright: not remisse, not mutable, nor attending unto vain things; sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and guarded in all the senses. Love is subject and obedient to Superiours, mean and abject to it self, devout and thankfull unto God, trusting and hoping alwayes in him, even then when God imparteth no sweetnesse unto it: for without sorrow, none lives in love.

8. He that is not ready to suffer all things, and stand to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought to embrace willingly, all that is hard and distastfull for his beloved; and not to turn away from him, for any contrary accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proof of a true Lover.

Sonne, thou art not yet a strong and prudent lover. Wherefore Lord? Because thou givest over for

for a small adversitie, and too ear-
nely seckest comfort. A constant
lover standeth firmly in temptati-
ons, and giveth not credit to the
crafty persuasions of the enemy.
As I please him in prosperitie, so
I am not unpleasaunt to him in
adversitie.

2. A prudent lover, considereth
not so much the gift of his lover,
as the love of the giver. He rather
esteemeth the good will, then the
value, and placeth all gifts under
his beloved. A noble lover resteth
not in the gift, but in me above
any gift. All therefore is not lost
if sometimes thou haft leisse taste
of me and my Saints then thou
wouldest. That good and sweet
desire which thou sometimes feel-
est, is the effect of present grace,
and a certain taste of the heaven-
ly countrey: whereon thou must
not relie too much, for it goeth and
cometh. But to fight against evil
motions of the mind which may
happen unto thee, and to despise

the suggestion of the devil, is a signe of virtue and great merit.

3. Let not therefore strange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatsoever, trouble thee. Retain a firm purpose and an upright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that sometimes thou art suddenly rapt on high, and presently returnest again unto the accustomed vanities of thy heart. For thou dost rather unwillingly suffer them, then commit them: and as long as they displease thee, and thou strivest against them, it is a merit, and no losse.

4. Know that thy ancient enemy, doth ever strive to hinder thy desire to good, and to divert thee from all devout exercise: to wit, from the worshipping of Saints, from the devout memorie of my passion, from the profitable remembrance of thy sinnes, from the guard of thine own heart, and from the firm purpose of profiting in virtue. He thrusteth many evil thoughts

thoughts into thy mind, that he may cause a wearisomenesse, and horrour in thee, to draw thee from devout prayer and reading. Humble confession is displeasing unto him, and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from receiving the Sacrament of my Body. Trut him not, nor care for him, although he should often set snares of deceit to intrap thee. Charge him with it, when he suggesteth evil, and unclean thoughts unto thee. Say unto him: Avant filthy spirit, blush miserable wretch, thou art filthy that bringest such things unto mine ears. Away from me wicked deceiver, thou that have no part in me: but Jesus shall be with me as a strong warriour, and thou shalt remain confounded. I had rather die and undergo any torment, then to consent unto thee. Hold thy peace and be silent, I will hear thee no more, though thou shouldst work me many troubles. My Lord is my light



light and salvation, whom shall I fear? If whole armies should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. Our Lord is my helper, and my Redeemer.

5. Fight like a good souldier: & if thou sometimes fall through frailty, recover greater forces then before, trusting in my more abundant grace: and take great heed of vain pleasing of thy self, and pride. This brings many into errour, and makes them somtimes fall into almost incurable blindnesse. Let the fall of the proud, foolishly presuming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and a perpetuall humiliatiōn.

CHAP. VII.

*That grace is to be hid under
the veil of Humilitie.*

SONNE, it is more profitable, and safe for thee to hide the grace of devotion, not to extoll thy self, nor to speak much, nor to esteem much thereof: but rather to despise thy

thy self, and fear it, as given to one unworthy thereof. This affection is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary. Think when thou art in grace, how miserable and needie thou art wont to be without it. Neither doth therein onely consist the profit of spirituall life, when thou hast the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently suffereſt the withdrawing thereof: so that thou be not then leſſe diligent in the exercise of prayer, nor ſuffer thy ſelf to paſſe over the reſt of thy accuſtomed good works: but that thou willingly perform what lieth in thee, according as thou art able & understandſt to be fit: not neglecting thy ſelf wholly for the drineſſe, and trouble of mind, which thou feeleſt.

2. There are many that when it ſucceeedeth not wel with them, preſent' y they become impatient or ſlothfull. The way of man is not alwaies

alwaies in his power, but it belongeth to God, to give, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, & whom he will, as it shall please him, and no more. Some unadvised persons have overthrown themselves for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of devotion, attempting more then they were able to perform, not weighing the measure of their weaknesse, but following rather the desire of their heart, then the judgement of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters then was pleasing to God, they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a dejected estate that built themselves nests in heaven, to the end that being humbled, & impoverished, they may learn not to flic with their own wings, but to live in hope under my fathers. They that are yet new, & unacquainted in the way of our Lord, unlesse they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived & overthrown.

3. And

3. And if they will rather follow their own judgement, then give credit to others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawn from their own conceit. Seldome those that are wise in their own opinion, suffer themselves humbly to be governed by others. A little knowledge with humilitie, and a slender understanding, is better then great treasures of learning with a vain self-liking. It is better for thee to have lesse, then much of that whereof thou maist be proud. He doth not discreetly, that wholly giveth himself over to mirth, forgetting his former poverty, and the chaste fear of God, which feareth to loose the grace which he hath obtained. Neither is he virtuously wise, that in time of adversity or any tribulation whatsoever, yieldeth to despairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me lesse confidently then he ought.

4. He that will be over secure
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in time of peace, shall be often found in time of warre too dejected and fearfull: If thou couldst alwayes continue humble, and lowly within thy self, and temper, and govern thy soul well, thou shouldst not so soon fall into danger and offence. It is good counsel, that when thou conceivest fervour of spirit, thou shouldst think what will become of thee, when that light shall leave thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may return again, which for thy instruction and my glory, I have withdrawn for a time.

5. Such proof is often more profitable, then if thou shouldst alwaies enjoy prosperity according to thy desire. For merits are not to be weighed in a man by the number of visions and comfort which he hath, or by his knowledge in scriptures, or by his being placed in high degree: but in that he is grounded in true humility, and replenished with divine charity, if he alwaies

alwaies purely & entirely seek the honour of God, if he esteem himself nothing, & with a sincere heart despise himself, and rejoyce more to be despised and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

C H A P. V I I I.

*Of a mean conceit of our selves
in the sight of God.*

SHall I speak unto my Lord, sith I am dust and ashes? If I esteem better of my self, behold thou standest against me, and my iniquities bear true witness: neither can I speak against it. But if I abase and esteem nothing of my self, and cast off all self conceipt, and (as I am) accompt my self to be dust, thy grace will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be neer unto my heart: and all estimation how little soever, shall be swallowed up in the depth of my nothing, and perish everlastingely. There thou shewest my self unto

unto me, what I am, what I have been, and whether I am come: for alas I am nothing: and I knew it not. And if I be left to my self, behold I become nothing, and a masse of infirmity. But if thou suddenly look upon me, I am presently made strong; and filled with new joy. And it is a great marvail, that I am so suddenly lifted up, and so graciously imbraced by thee, that of mine own weight, alwaies sink downward.

2. Thy love is cause hereof, freely preventing me, and relieving me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous dangers, and (as I may truly say) delivering me from innumerable evils. For surely by evil loving my self, I lost my self: and by seeking thee alone, and sincerely loving thee, I have found both my self and thee, and for thy love have more deeply brought my self to nothing. For that thou, O most sweet Jesu, dealest with me above all

all desert, and above all that *I* dare hope and request.

3. Blessed be thou my God ; for although *I* be unworthy of all good, yet the noblenes of thy bounty and thy infinite goodness, never ceaseth to do good even to the ungratefull, and to them that be turned away far from thee. Turn us unto thee O Lord that we may be gratafull, humble, and devout : for thou art our safety, our power, and our strength.

CHAP. IX.

That all things are to be referred unto God as unto the last end.

So *I* ought to be thy chiefest and last end, if thou desire to be truly blessed. With this intention thy affection shall be purifed, which is oftentimes inclined inordinately to it self, and unto creatures. For if in any thing thou seek thy self, thou presently faintest and

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and driest up within thy self. Direct therefore all things chiefly unto me, for I am he that have given all. Consider every thing as flowing from the highest good, and therefore all things are to be reduced unto me as unto their first beginning.

2. Out of me, as out of living fountains, the little and the great, the poor and the rich, do draw the water of life: and they that willingly, and freely serve me, shall receive grace for grace. But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, shall not be grounded in true joy, nor enlarged in his heart, but shall be many waies hindred and straitned. Thou oughtest therefore to ascribe no good unto thy self, nor attribute the praise of virtue unto any man, but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. I have bestowed all, and will that all be returned to me again: and with great severity I require thanks.

3. This

3. This is the truth, that putteth to flight vain glory. And if heavenly grace, and true charity enter in, there shall be no envy nor grudging of heart, neither shall there be any place for self-love. For divine charity overcometh all, and enlargeth all the forces of the soul. If thou understand aright, in me alone thou wilt rejoice, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised above all things, and to be blessed in all.

CHAP. X.

That despising the world, it is sweet to serve God.

Now I will speak again O Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the ears of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnesse O Lord, which thou hast hidden for those that fear thee! But what art thou to

to them that love thee? What to them that serve thee with their whole heart? Truely unspeakable is the sweetnesse of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that love thee. In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetnesse of thy charity, for that when I was not, thou madest me: and when I went astray far off from thee, thou broughtest me back again, that I might serve thee: and hast commanded me to love thee.

2. O fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee? How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, even when I withered away and perished! Thou hast used mercy with thy servant beyond all the expectation of my heart: and hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shall I return unto thee for this grace? For it is not granted to every one to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and to undertake a life of religion and per-

perfection. Is it much that I serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve? It ought not to seem much unto me to serve thee: but this rather seemeth much, and marvellous unto me, that thou vouchsafest to receive into thy service one so poore and unworthy, and to joyn him with thy beloved servants.

3. Behold all is thine which I have, and whereby I serve thee. And yet in very deed thou rather servest me, then I thee. Behold heaven and earth, which thou hast created for the service of a man are ready at hand, and do dayly perform whatsoever thou doft command; and this is little: yea thou haft also appointed the Angels to the service of man. But that which exceedeth all, is, that thou thy self haft vouchsafed to serve man, and promised to give thy self unto him.

4. What shall I give thee for all these thousands of benefits? I would I could serve thee all the dayes

dayes of my life ! I would I were able at least for one day, to do thee some worthy and acceptable service ! Thou art truly worthy of all service, of all honour and everlasting praise. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poore servant, that am bound to serve thee with all my forces, neither ought I ever to cease to praise thee. And this I wish to do, this I desire : and whatsoever is wanting unto me, vouchsafe I beseech thee to supply.

5. It is a great honour, a very great glory to serve thee, and to despise all things for thee. For great grace shall be given to them, that shall willingly subject themselves unto thy most holy service. They shall receive most sweet comfort of the holy Ghost, that for thy love shall renounce all carnall delights. They shall attain great freedome of mind, that for thy names sake shall enter into the narrow way, and shall have left off all care of this world.

6. O sweet and delightfull ser-vitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy ! O sa-cred state of religious bondage, which maketh man equall to An-gels, pleasing to God, terrible to devils, and gratefull and of great esteem to all the faithfull : O ser-vice to be embraced, and always wished for, by which we obtain the greatest good, and attain to that joy which never shall have end !

C H A P. XI.

That the desires of our heart are to be examined and moderated.

Sonne, thou oughtest to learn many things more, which thou hast not yet well learned. What are those Lord ? That thou frame thy desire wholly according to my pleasure: and be not a lover of thy self, but a diligent follower of my will. Thy desires oftentimes do stirre thee up, and drive thee

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forwards with violence; but consider whether thou art moved rather for my honour, then for thine own profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever I shall ordain; but if there lurk in thee any self-inclination, behold this is it that hindreth thee, and weighth thee down.

2. Beware therefore thou incline not too much upon any desire that cometh to thy mind, before thou ask my counsel, least perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou begin now to dislike that which before did please thee, and which thou earnestly desiredst as the best; For every affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed, nor every contrary affection, at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to use a restraint even in good desires and endeavours, least by importunity thou incurre distraction of mind, and by evil example become a scandall unto others;

others : or being gain-said by others , thou be suddenly trou- bled and fall.

3. Yet sometimes thou ought-
est to use violence and resist man-
fully thy sensuall appetites , and
respe&t not what thy body would ,
or would not ; but rather to la-
bour , that even perforce it be
subject to the spirit. And it is to
be chastised so long , and to be for-
ced under servitude , untill it
readily obey in all things , and
learn to be content with a little ,
and to be pleased with ordinary
things , & not to murmur against
any inconvenience.

CHAP. XII.

*Of the effect of Patience, and of
strife against concupiscence.*

Lord God, I perceive patience
is very necessary unto me, for
that many adversities do happen
in this life. Howsoever I shall
dispose of my peace, my life can-

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not be without warre and affliction. So it is Sonne. And my will is not, that thou seek after that peace which is void of temptations, or that feeleth no contrarie-ties, but then think that thou hast found peace when thou art exerci-sed with sundry tribulations, and tried in many adversties.

2. If thou say that thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of Per-gatorie? Of two evils, the leſſe is alwaves to be chosen. That thou mayſt therefore avoid everlasting punishments in the next world, endeavour to suffer patiently for God, the present evils of this. Doest thou think that men of this world ſuffer little or nothing? Thou art deceived. Look into the life even of them that live in greatest delicacies, and thou ſhalt find it otherwife. But thou wilt ſay, they have many delights, and follow their own wills, and therefore they make ſmall account of their

their tribulationst Be it so, that they have whatsoever they will; but how long dost thou think it will last ?

3. Behold the wealthy of this world vanish away like smoke, and there shall be no memory of their joyes past. Yea even while they live also, they rest not in them without grief, irksomenesse, and fear. For the self same thing in which they take their delight, is oftentimes the cause of sorrow unto them, and much affliction. They have their desert, who for that they immoderately seek, and follow delights, they do not obtain them, but with shame and sorrow.

4. O how short and deceitfull, how inordinate & filthy are those pleasures! Yea, so senselesse and blind are men that they understand it not, but like dumb beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life, they incurre the eternal death of their soul. Do not thou therefore,

my son, follow the disordinate inclinations of thy corrupt nature, but forsake thine own will. Delight in our Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thy heart.

5. If thou desire true delight, & to be more plentifully comforted by me; behold, in the contempt of all worldly things, and in the cutting off all base delights, shall be thy blessings, and abundant comforts shall be given thee. And how much the more thou withdrawest thy self from all comfort of creatures, so much the sweeter & more forcible consolations shalt thou find in me. But at first thou canst not attain unto them without a certain grief, labour and strife. The old custome will make resistance, & thou must overcome it with another custome that is better. Thy flesh will murmur, but thou must bridle it with fervour of spirit. The old serpent wil sting & trouble thee, but by prayer he shall be put to flight: & wth profitable labour, thou shalt shut the door against him.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a subject according to the example of Christ.

SONNE, he that endeavoureth to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraweth himself from grace. And he that seeketh to have things in private, shall loose the common. He that doth not willingly and freely submit himself to his Superior, it is a signe that his flesh is not yet perfectly obedient unto him, but oftentimes rebelleth and murmureth against him. Learn therefore readily to submit thy self to thy superior, if thou desirest to subdue thy passions. For the outward enemie is sooner overcome, if the inward man be in good estate. There is no worse enemie, nor more troublesome to the soul, then thou unto thy self, not agreeing well with the spirit. Thou must of necessity

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have a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt prevail against flesh and bloud.

2. Because thou lovest thy self as yet too inordinately, therefore thou art afraid to refigne thy self wholly to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou that art durt & nothing submittest thy self to a man for God, when I the Almighty and highest Sovereigne, who created all things of nothing, humbly submittid my self unto man for thee? I became the most humble and abject of all men, that thou mightest overcome thy pride with my humility. Learn to obey thou that art durt; learn to humble thy self thou earth & clay, and put thy self under the feet of all men. Learn to break thy own will, and to yield thy self to all subjection.

3. Take courage against thy self, and suffer not pride to live in thee; but humble and submitt thy self to all, that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as durt of the

streets

streets under their feet. Vain man, what canst thou complain of? what canst thou answer foul sinner, to them that reprove thee, who hast so often offended God, and so many times deserved hell? But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in my sights: that thou mightest know my love, and alwaies remain gratefull for my benefits: that thou mightest continually give thy self to true subjection and humilitie, and mightest bear patiently the contempt of thy self.

C H A P. X I V.

*Of the secret Judgement of God
to be considered, lest we be ex-
tolled in our good deeds.*

THou thundrest thy judgements over me, O Lord, and shakest all my bones with fear and trembling: my soul is sore afraid. I stand astonished and consider, for that the heavens are not pure

in thy sight. If thou hast found wickednesse in Angels, and haſt not pardoned them, what shall become of me ? Stars fell from heaven, & what do I presume that am I? They whose works seemed laudable, fell into the lowest : and I haſe ſeen them, that did eat bread of Angels, to be delighted with the husks of Swine.

2. There is no sanctity, if thou O. Lord, withdrawest thy hand. No wifedome availeth, if thou ceaſeſt to govern. No strength helpeth, if thou leavest to defend. No chauſtity ſecure, if thou doſt not protec&t it. No cuſtody of our own profitable, if thy ſacred watchfolneſſe be not preſent. For if thou leavest us, we ſink and periſh: but if thou vouchſafeſt to viſit us, we are raifed up, and do enjoy life. We are incoſtant, but by thee we are Strengthneſſed: we wax cold, but by thee we receive heat.

3. O how meanly and basely ought

ought I to think of my self ! how little, yea nothing ought I to esteem it, if I seem to have any good ! O Lord, how ought I to submit my self under thy unsearchable Judgements: where I find my self to be nothing else, but nothing, and nothing ! O unmeasurable weight ! sea that can never be passed over, where I find my self one-ly and wholly nothing ! Where then is the lurking hole of glory ? Where is the confidence conceived of virtue ? All vain glory is swallowed up in the depth of thy Judgements, which hang over my head.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight ? Shall clay glory against him that frameth it ? How can he be lifted up with vain words, whose heart is truly subject to God ? All the world cannot move him to any elation of mind, whom truth hath subjected unto it, neither shall he be moved with the tongues of all his praisers, that hath settled

his

his whole hope in God. For they also that speak, behold, are nothing : they shall pass away with the sound of the words : but the truth of our Lord remaineth for ever.

CHAP. XV.

*What we ought to do, and say
in every thing which we
desire.*

SOn, say thus in every thing : Lord if it be pleasing unto thee, let this be done in this sort. Lord if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name. Lord if thou seekest it expedient for me, and allowest it to be profitable, then grant unto me, that I may use this unto thine honour. But if thou knowest it will be hurtfull unto me, and not profitable to the health of my soul, take from me all such desire. For every desire, proceedeth not from the holy Ghost, though it seem unto man right and

and good. It is hard to judge whether a good spirit, or the contrary, drive thee to desire this or that: or whether also by thine own spirit thou be moved therunto. Many are deceived in the end, who at the first seemed to be led by a good spirit.

2. Alwaies therefore, whatsoeuer occurreth unto thy mind to be desired, let it be desired with the fear of God, and with humility of heart: and above all, thou oughtest to commit it unto me with full resignation of thy self: and thou oughtest to say. Lord thou knowest what is best, do this, or that, as thou pleasest. Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knowest, and as best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will. I am in thy hand, turn me, and turn me again which way soever thou please. Behold I am

thy

thy servant, ready to obey thee in all things: for I desire not to live unto my self, but unto thee: and would to God it might be in some worthy and perfect manner.

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

3. Grant me thy grace sweet Jesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and persevere with me untill the end. Grant me alwaies to desire and will, that which is most acceptable unto thee, and best pleaseth thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my will ever follow thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine: and not to be able to will, or refuse any thing else, but what thou wilt, or rejectest.

4. Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and to love for thy sake to be contemned, and not to be known in this world. Grant that above all things that can be desired, I may rest in thee,

thee, and make my heart to enjoy peace in thee. Thou art the true peace of the heart, thou art the only rest: out of thee all things are troublesome and unquiet. In peace in the self-same: that is, in thee, oh chiefest eternal good, I will sleep and rest. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

*That true comfort is to be sought
in God alone.*

WHATSOEVER I can desire, or imagine for my comfort, I look not for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I should alone have all the comforts of the world, and might enjoy all the delights thereof, it is certain that they could not long endure. Wherefore my soul, thou canst not be fully comforted, nor have perfect delight, but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receiver of the humble. Expect a while my soul, expect the divine promise, and

and thou shalt have abundance of all good things in heaven. If thou desire inordinately the things that are present, thou shalt loose the celestiall & eternal. Have temporall things in use, and the eternal in desire. Thou canst not be filled with any temporall goods because thou art not created to enjoy them.

2. Although thou enjoyest all that is created, yet canst thou not be happy thereby nor blessed, but in God that hath created all things, thy whole beatitude and happiness consisteth: not such as is seen and commended by the foolish lovers of the world; but such as the good faulfull servants of Christ expect, and the spirituall & clean of heart, whose conversation is in heaven, sometimes take a tast of. Vain and short is all humane comfort. Blessed and true is the comfortt which is received inwardly from truth. A devout man everie where carrieth with him J E S U S his comforter, and faith unto him:

Be

Be present with me, Lord Jesus, in every place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwaies willing to want all humane comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will and just proof be unto me as the greatest comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwaies, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

CHAP. XVII.

That all our care is to be placed in God.

Soane, suffer me to do with thee what I please. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkest as man; thou judgest in many things as humane affection persuadeth thee. Lord, what thou saiest is true. Thy solicitude for me is greater, then all the care that I can take for my self. For he standeth at too great a hazard, that casteth not his whole care upon thee. Lord, so that my will may

may remain right and firm in thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please thee. For it cannot be but good, whatsoever thou dost with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darknesse, be thou blessed: and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou again blessed. If thou vouchsafest to comfort me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou also ever blessed. Sonne, so thou oughtest to be, as ready to suffer, as to receive joy. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poor & needy, as plentifull & rich.

3. Lord, I will willingly suffer for thee, whatsoever thy pleasure shall befall me. I will receive indifferently from thy hand, good and evil, sweet, and sower, delightfull and sorrowfull, and give thee thanks for all that happeneth unto me. Keep me from all sinne, and I will neither fear death, nor hell: so as thou dost not for ever cast me from thee, and blot me out of the

the book of life, what tribulation soever befall me, shall not hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporall miseries, by the example of Christ, are to be born patiently.

SONNE, I descended from Heaven for thy health: I took upon me thy miseries, my charity and not any necessitie drawing me thereunto, that thou mightest learn patience, and not refuse to bear temporall miseries. For from the houre of my birth, untill my death on the Crosse, I was not without suffering of grief. I suffered great want of temporall things: I often heard many complaints against me: I bare patiently shame and reproaches; for benefits received ingratitude; for miracles, blasphemies; for heavenly doctrine, reprehensions.

2. Lord, for that thou wert patient

tient in thy life time, chiefly in fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reason that I miserable sinner should have patience in all things according to thy will, and for mine own health, bear the burthen of this corruptible life, as long as thou wilt. For although this present life be burdensome, yet notwithstanding it is now by thy grace, made very meritorious; and by thy example and the foot-steps of thy Saints, more plain and tollerable to the weak. Yea, much more comfortable also, then it was in times past in the old law, when the gate of heaven remained shut: and the way also to heaven seemed darker, when so few took care to seek after thy Kingdome. Neither they also that then were just, and were ordained to be saved, could enter into the heavenly glory before thy passion, and the debt of thy sacred death was discharged.

3. O how great thanks am I bound to give thee, that thou hast vouchsafed

vouchsafed to shew unto me, and to all faithfull souls a direct, and sure way to thy everlasting Kingdome! For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we go unto thee that art our Crown. If thou hadst not gone before us and taught us, who would have taken care to follow? Alas how many would stay behind, and remain farre off, if they beheld not thy excellent examples! Behold we are yet cold although we have heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy heavenly documents, what would become of us, if we had not so great light to follow thee?

C H A P. X I X.

*Of suffering of injuries: and
who is proved to be
truly patient.*

W^Hat is it thou sayest, Sonne? Ceale to complain, considering my passion, and that of my other Saints. Thou hast not yet made

made resistance to the shedding of bloud. It is but little thou suffereſt, in comparison of them that have ſuffered ſo much, ſo strongly tempted, ſo grievously afflieted, ſo many wayes tried and exerciſed. Thou oughteſt therefore to call to mind the heavy ſufferings of others, that thou maſt the eaſier bear the little adverſities which thou ſufferest. And if they ſeem not little, beware leaſt thy impa-tience be cauſe thereof. Yet whe-ther they be little, endeavour to bear all patiencly.

2. How much the better thou diſpoſeſt thy ſelf to ſuffering, ſo much the more wiſely thou doſt, and ſo much the more doeſt thou meri: thou ſhalt more eaſily alſo endure it, iſ thy mind be prepared, and thy ſelf accuſtomed thereunto. Do not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things of ſuch a one, at the hands of ſuch a perſon, nor theſe things are not to be ſuffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong and

upbraided

upbraided me with those things which I never thought of: but of another I will willingly suffer, and as I shall see cause. Such a thought is foolish, it considereth not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned, but rather weigheth the persons, and the injuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he listeth. But he that is indeed patient, mindeth not by whom he is exercised whether by his Superior, or some of his equals, or by his inferiours whether by a good and holy man, or by a perverse and unworthy person. But indifferently from all creatures, how much soever, or how often soever any adversity happeneth unto him, he taketh all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gain: for that nothing be for God how little soever, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be

4. Be thou therefore alwaies prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory. Without combate thou canst not attain unto the Crown of patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently. Without labour, there is no coming to rest: nor without fight, can the victory be obtained. Lord let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer little, and that I am quickly dismayed, when a small adversity ariseth. Let all exercise of tribulation be made pleasing unto me and be welcome for thy name: for, to suffer, & to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soul.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our own infirmity: and of the miseries of this life.

1 Will confess against me my injustice: I will confess unto thee, O Lord, my infirmitie. Often-times it is a small matter that dis-comforteth, and grieveth me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a small temptation cometh, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is sometimes a very trifle from whence great temptations do proceed. And whilst I think my self somewhat safe, when I least expect it, I find my self sometimes overcome with a small blast.

2 Behold, therefore Lord, my humility and my frailty every way known unto thee. Have mercy on me and deliver me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I stick not fast therein; let me not for ever remain dejected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back,

I and

and confoundeth me in thy sight, for that I am so subject to fall, and weak in resisting of my passions. And though I do not altogether consent, yet their continuall assaults are troublesome and grievous unto me: and it is tedious and a very irksome thing to live thus daily in strife. Hereby my infirmity is made known unto me: for that wicked phantasies do alwayes much more easily enter in upon me, then they can be cast out again.

3. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous lover of faithfull souls, let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh. Strengthen me with heavenly force, least my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subject to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand: against which I ought to fight, as long as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kind of life is this, where

where tribulations and miseries are never wanting! where all is set with snares, and compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another cometh; yea, and during the first conflict also, many others come unlocked for one after another.

4. And how can a life be loved that hath so many afflictions, and is subject to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life, that begetteth so many deaths and plagues? And yet it is loved, and many seek to delight themselves therein. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceitfull and vain, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our flesh do too much over-rule us. Some things draw us to love it, others to condemn it. To the love of the world do draw us the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life; but the

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pains and miseries that do justly
follow them, causeth a hatred and
lothsomele thereof.

5. But alas ! wicked pleasure
overcometh the mind which is
given over to the world, and she
esteemeth it a delight to be under
thorns, because she hath neither
seen nor tasted the sweetnesse of
God, and the inward delight of
virtue. But they that perfectly
contemn the world, and endeavour
to live to God under holy disci-
pline, these are not ignorant of the
divine sweetnesse, promised to the
true forsakers of the world, and do
more clearly see how gueously
the world erreth, and how it is
many wayes deceived.

CHAP. XXI.

*[That we are to rest in God
above all his gifts.]*

Above all rhings, and in all
things, my soul, thou shalt ever
rest in God; for he is the everlasting

ing rest of the Saints. Grant me, most sweet and loving Jesu, to rest in thee above all creatures, above all health and beauty, above all glory and honour, above all power and dignitie, above all knowledge and learning, above all riches and arts, above all joy and gladnesse, above all fame and praise, above all sweetnesse and comfort, above all hope and promise, above all merit and desire, above all gifts and presents that thou canst give and impart unto us, above all joy and jubilee that the mind of man can receive & feel: lastly, above Angels and Archangels, and above all the heavenly host: above all visible and invisible things, and above all that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God surpassest all, thou alone most high, thou alone most powerfull, thou alone most full and sufficient, thou alone most sweet and comfortable, thou alone most

beautifull, and loving, thou alone most noble and glorious above all things; in whom all good things together both are perfectly, and ever have been and shall be: and therefore it is too little and not sufficient, whatsoever thou bestowest on me beside thy self, or revealest unto me of thy self, or promisest, whilst thou art not seen, and not fully obtained: for surely my heart cannot rest, nor be fully contented unlesse it rest in thee, and surmount all gifts and creatures whatsoever.

3. O my most beloved Spouse Christ Jesus, the most chaste lover, the governour of all creatures, who will give me wings of true liberty to flie and rest in thee! O when shall it be fully granted me, to consider in quietnesse of mind, and see how sweet thou art my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my self in thee, that for thy love I may not feel my self, but alone above all sense and feeling thee.

ing, in a manner not known unto all. But now I oftentimes lament, and hear my infelicity with grief. For that many evils occurr in this vale of miseries, which do often trouble, grieve, and darken me, often hinder and distract me, allure and entangle me, to the end I should not have free access unto thee, and that I should not enjoy those sweet and heavenly embracings, which thou alwayes givest to the blessed and celestiall spirits. Let my sighs and manifold defolations on earth move thee.

4. O Jesus, splendour of eternal glory, and comfort of the pilgrim soul, with thee is my tongue without voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come? Let him come unto me his poore servant, and make me glad. Let him put out his hand, and deliver me miserable wretch, from all anguish. Come, come blessed Lord, for without thee I shall

have no joyfull day, nor houre. Thou art my joy, and without thee, there is nothing but want. A wretched creature I am, and in a manner imprisoned and leaden with yrons, untill thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence, and givest me liberty, and shewest a favourable countenance unto me.

5. Let others seek what they please in stead of thee, but for me, nothing else doth nor shall delight me, but thou onely my God, my hope, my everlasting health. I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, untill thy grace return again, and thou speake inwardly unto me. Behold, I am here; behold, I come unto thee; because thou hast called upon me. Thy tears and the desire of thy soul, thy humilitie, and the contrition of thy heart have inclined, & brought me unto thee. And I said, Lord, I have called thee, and have desired to enjoy thee, being ready to forfaine all

all things for thee. For thou first hast sturre^d me up that I might seek thee. Bleffed be thou therefore, O Lord, that haft shewed this goodnelle to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but that he do greatly humble himself in thy sight, alwaies mindfull of his own iniquitie, and batenesse? For there is none like unto thee in all whatsoeuer is wonderfull, in heaven and earth. Thy words are good, thy judgements true, and by thy providence all things are governed. Praise therefore and glory be unto thee, O wisdome of the eternal Father: let my tongue, my soul, & all creatures, together praise & blesse thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

O Pen, O Lord my heart in thy Law, and teach me to walk in thy Commandments. Grant me

I S. to

to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration; that hence-forward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I know, and confesse, that I am not able to give thee due thanks, for the favours which thou bestowest upon me, even in the least moment. I am leise then the least of thy benefits: and when I consider the excellency of thy Majestie, the greatness thereof maketh my spirit to faint.

2. All that we have in our soul and body, and whatsoever we possesse outwardly or inwardly, naturally or spiritually, are thy benefits, and do praise thee as bountifull, pious, and good, from whom we have received all that is good. Although one have received more, another leise, all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee even the least cannot be had. He that hath received greater, cannot glory

ry of his own desert, nor extoll himself above others, nor insult over the lesser, for he is greater and better than ascribeth least unto himself, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks. And he that esteemeth himself basest of all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greater blessings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry, nor bear it impatiently, nor envy them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather unto thee, and chiefly praise thy goodness, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly, without respect of persons. All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one; and why this man hath less, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who dost weigh in just measure the deserts of every one.

4. Where-

4. Wherefore my Lord God, I esteem it a great benefit, not to have much, whereby outwardly and before men I might seem worthy of praise and glory: so that he who considereth his own poverty & baseness, ought not therefore to conceive grief, or sorrow, or to be therefore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad for that thou, O God, hast chosen the poor and humble, and the despised of this world for thy self, and for thy familiar and domesticall friends. Witnesse are thy Apostles themselves, whom thou hast appointed princes over all the earth. And yet they lived without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, nican to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceit, that they rejoiced to receive contumelies for thy name, & what the world abhorreth, they imbraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therefore ought so to rejoice him that loveth thee, and

and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy will in himself, and the pleasure of thy eternall appointment wherewith he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: and as peaceable and content in the last, as in the first place: & as willingly to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteem or account, as to be preferred in honour before all others, and to be greater in the world. For thy will and the love of thy glory, ought to be preferred before all things: and to comfort him more, and please him better then all the benefits which he hath received or can desire.

CHAP. XXIII.

*Of four things that bring
much peace.*

¶onne, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty.

Do

Do Lord, I beseech thee, as thou saist, for I shall be very glad to hear it. Endeavour my Sonne to do rather the will of another, then thine own. Ever choose rather to have lesse, then more. Alwaies seek the lowest place, and to be inferiour to every one. Wish alwayes, and pray, that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man entreth into the limits of peace and most quiet rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speech containeth much perfection. It is little in words, but full in sense, and abundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then should I not so easily be troubled, for as often as I feel my self unquiet, and afflicted, I find that I have strayed from this doctrine. But thou that canst all things, and ever lovest the good and profit of my soul, increase in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words and perfect mine own health.

A Prayer against evil thoughts.

3. My Lord God be not farre from me: my God have regard to help me, for sundry thoughts have risen up against me, and great fears afflicting my soul. How shall I passe through them without hurt? How shall I break them? I, saith he, will go before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and reveal unto thee hidden secrets. Do Lord as thou saist, and let all evil thoughts flee from before thy face. This is my hope, and my onely comfort, to flee unto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

A Prayer for enlightening of the mind.

4. Enlighten me, O good Jesu, with the clearnesse of inward light, and

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and expell all darknesse of my
heart. Represse the many waver-
ing thoughts, and beat down the
fury of the temptations which vio-
lently assault me. Fight strongly
for me, and vanquish the evil
beasts, that is, the alluring con-
cupiscences, that peace may be
made in thy virtue, and abun-
dance of thy praise found in thy
holy court, which is a pure con-
science. Command the winds and
tempests: say unto the sea, Be still:
and to the north wind, Blow not;
and a great calm shall ensue.

5. Send forth thy light and thy
truth, that they may shine upon
the earth, for I am empty and un-
profitable earth, untill thou im-
partest thy light unto me. Poure
out thy grace from above, wash
my heart with heavenly dew, give
waters of devotion, to wash the
face of the earth, to bring forth
good and perfect fruit. Lift up my
mind, overcharged with the weight
of sinne: draw up my whole
desire

desire to heavenly treasures, that having tasted the sweetnesse of celestiall happinesse, it may loath to think of earthly vanities.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfie my desire. Joyn me unto thee with an unspeakable band of love: for thou onely fillest the mind of him that loves thee, and without thee all things are distastfull.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

SON, be not curious, trouble not thy self with idle cares. What is this or that to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man do, or speak this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give accompt of thy self. Why therefore doest thou trouble thy self?

Behold

Behold I know every one what he is, and do see all things that are under the sunne, and do understand how it is with every one what he thinketh, what he would, and at what his intention aimeth. **A**ll things therefore are to be committed unto me: but do thou keep thy self in good peace, and suffer the unquiet to do as they will. Whatsoever they shall have done, or said, shall fall upon themselves, for they cannot deceive me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be known to many, nor to have the private love of men: for these things breed distractions, and cause great darknesse of heart. I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou didest diligently observe my coming, and didest open the doore of thy heart unto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy self in all things.

Wherein

CHAP. XXV.

Wherein the firm peace of the heart, and true profit doth consist.

SON, I have said : Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you. All do desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertain unto true peace. My peace is with the humble, and meek of heart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt hear me and follow my voice, thou maist enjoy much peace. What then shall I do? In every thing attend unto thy self what thou doest, and what thou saiest : and direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou maiest please me alone, and desire or seek nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others, judge nothing rashly : neither do thou intangle thy self with things not committed unto thee ! and doing thus

thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2. But never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart or body, is not the state of this life, but of everlasting rest. Think not therefore, that thou hast found true peace, if thou feel-est no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary : nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire. Neither do thou then esteem highly of thy self, or imagine thy self to be especially beloved, if thou be in great devotion, and sweet-ness, for in these things a true lover of virtue is not tried : neither doth the profit and perfection of man, consist in having them.

3. Wherein then Lord ? In offering thy self from the very bot-tom of thy heart, unto the divine service, not seeking thine own interest, or commodity, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor eternity: so that with equall coun-tenance,

tenance, thou maist persist in thanksgiving, both in prosperity and in adversity, weighing all things with an equall ballance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn from thee, thou prepare thy heart to suffer greater matters, and not justifie thy self, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictions, but justifie me in whatsoever I appoint, and praise my holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace: and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face again with great joy. And if thou attain to the full contempt of thy self, then shalt thou enjoy as great abundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

of

C H A P. X X V I.

*Of the excellency of a free mind,
which humble prayer bet-
ter deserveth then
reading.*

Lord, it is the work of a perfect man, never to slack his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and as it were to passe without care, through many cares : not faintingly, but with a certaine priviledge of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserve me from the cares of this life: least I should be too much intangled thereby: and from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure : from all hindrances of the soul, least broken with troubles I should be dejected and dismayed. I mean not from those things that worldly vanity so greatly desireth, but from those miseries,

misteries, that as punishments, do weigh down and hinder the soul of thy servant, with the generall curse of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of spirit, as often as it would.

3. O my God, the unspeakable sweetnesse, make bitter unto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away from the love of everlasting happiness, and wickedly allure me to it self, with the force of certain present delight. Let not flesh and bloud overcome me, O Lord. Let not the world, and the short glory thereof deceive me. Let not the Devil and his subtile fraud, supplant me. Give me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to persevere. Give me instead of all comforts of the world, the mo^t sweet unction of thy spirit, and in lieu of carnall love, powre into my soul the love of thy name.

4. Behold, meat, drink, cloathes, and other necessaries for the main-
tenance

tenance of the body, are burdensome unto a fervent spirit. Grant me to affect such nourishments in due measure, and not to be intangled with an over great desire of them. It is not lawfull to renouace them wholly, for that nature is to be maintained; but to desire superfluities, and those things that do rather delight, then sustain, the law of God forbiddeth, for otherwise the flesh would rebell against the spirit. Herein I beseech thee, let thy hand govern me, and teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

*That private love most hindreth
from the chiefeſt good.*

SON, thou oughtest to give all for all, and to retain nothing of thy ſelf. Know that the love of thy ſelf, doth hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the love, & affection thou beareſt

bearest them, so doth every thing cleave unto thee more or lesse. If thy love be pure, simple, and well ordered, thou shalt be free from bondage. Covet not that which thou mayest not have: Be not willing to have that, which may hinder thee & deprive thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou commitest not thy self wholly unto me from the bottome of thy heart, with all things that thou canst desire or have.

2. Why doest thou consume thy self with a vain grief? Why tyrest thou thy mind with needless cares? Resigne thy self to me, and thou shalt feel no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thine own commoditie and pleasure, thou shalt never be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind: for in every thing somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3. Not every externall thing therefore attained, and heaped together, helpeth thee ; but it rather availeth if thou despise it, and doest root it out from thy heart, which thou ~~must~~ not understand onely of thy revenues and wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vain praise ; all which do passe away with this fading world. The place availeth little, if the spirit of fervour be wanting : neither shall that peace which is sought abroad, long continue, if the state of thy heart be destitute of a true foundation : that is, unlesse thou persist in me, thou mayest change, but not better thy self. For when occasion doth happen, thou shalt find that which thou soughtest to flee, and perhaps more.

*A prayer for cleansing the heart,
and obtaining of heavenly
wisdom.*

4. Confirm me, O Lord, with the grace of thy holy Spirit. Give

me

me force to strengthen my inward man, and to purge my heart from all unprofitable care and grief; not to be drawn away with sundry desires of any thing, either little or great, but to consider all things, how they are transitory, and do quickly fade, and that my self do also passe away together with thē: for nothing is permanent under the sunne, where all things are vanitie and affliction of mind. O how wise is he that so considereth them!

5. Grant me, O Lord, heavenly wisdome, that *I* may learn above all things to seek and find thee, above all things to delight in thee, and to love thee, and to think of all created things as they are, according to the disposition of thy wisdome. Grant me prudently to avoid him that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdome not to be moved with every blast of words, not to give ear

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to dangerous flatterie : for so we
shall go on securely in the way
which we have begun.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the tongue of slanderers.

Sonne, be not grieved if some
think evil of thee, and speak
that which thou dost not willingly
heare. Thou oughtest to judge
the worst of thy self, and to think
no man weaker then thy self. If
thou walk according to the spirit,
thou wilt not much esteem of fly-
ing words. It is not small wisdom
to be silent in time of evil, and in-
wardly to turn to me, and not
to be troubled with the judgement
of men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the
tongues of men : For whether
they judge well or evil, thou art
neverthelesse alwayes the same.
Where is true peace, and true glo-
ry? Is it not in me? And he that
coveteth not to please men, nor
feareth

feareth to displease them, shall enjoy much peace. From inordinate love and vain fear, ariseth all disquiet of heart, and distraction of the senses,

CHAP. XXIX.

*How we ought to call upon God,
and blesse him when tribulati-
on draweth near.*

Blessed (O Lord) be thy name for ever, since it pleaseth thee, that this temptation and tribulation should fall upon me; I cannot flee it, but have need to flee to thee that thou mayest help me, and turn it to my good. Lord, I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present grief. And now, beloved Father, what shall I say? I am taken in narrow straits, save me in this hour. Yea, therefore I am fallen in this hour, that thou mayest be glorified when I shall be greatly humbled, and by thee

delivered. Let it please thee, Lord, to deliver me: for poore wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without thee? Grant patience, Lord, even this time also. Help me my God and then I will not fear how much soever I be oppressed,

2. And now in this, what shall I say? Lord, thy will be done. I have well deserved to be afflicted and grieved. Surely I ought to bear it: and I would to God I might bear it with patience, until the rempeſt be paſled over, and it become calm. But thine omnipo-tent hand is able to take this tem-ption from me, and to affwage the violence thereof, that I utterly ſink not under it, as oftentimes heretofore thou haſt done unto me (my Mercy!) And how much the more hard it is to me, ſo much the more eaſie is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

C H A P. X X X.

Of craving the divine aid & confidence of recovering grace.

SONE, I am thy Lord, who do use to give comfort in this day of tribulation. Come unto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth heavenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy self unto prayer. For before thou doest earnestly commend thy self to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy self in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that all doth little profit thee, untill thou consider that I am he that deliver those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerfull help, nor profitable counsel, nor remedie that can continue. But now thou having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength again in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand, saith our Lord, to repair all, not

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onely entirely, but also abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like unto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firm and constant. Take courage and be patient, comfort will be given thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee, and a vain fear that afflightheth thee. What else doth the care for future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow upon sorrow? Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. It is a vain and unprofitable thing to be grieved, or to rejoice for future things that perhaps will never happen.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations: and a signe of little courage to be so easily drawn away by the suggestion of the enemy. For he careth not so he delude, and deceive thee, whether it be true or false which he proposeth:

whe-

whether he overthrow thee with the love of present or the fear of future things. Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither do thou fear. Believe in me, and put thy trust in my mercy. When thou thinkest thy self furthest off from me, oftentimes I am nearest unto thee. When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes greatest gain of merit is at hand. All is not lost, when any thing falleth out contrary unto thee. Thou must not judge according to that which thou feelest for the present: nor give thy self over to any grief from whence soever it cometh, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4. Think not thy self wholly left, although for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the rest of my servants, that ye be

K 5 exec-

exercised with many adversities, then that ye should have all things according to your desires. I know the secret thoughts of thy heart, and that it is very expedient for thy souls health, that thou be left sometimes without taste and feeling of spirituall sweetnesse ; least perhaps thou shouldest be puffed up with good successse, and shouldest please thy self in that, which thou art not. That which I have given, I can take away, and restore it again when I please.

5. When *I* give it, it is mine: when *I* withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is every good and every perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or auy crosse whatsoever, repine not, nor be dismayed, I can quickly lift thee up again, and turn all thy sorrow into joy. Nevertheless *I* am just, and greatly to be praised, when *I* do all this unto thee.

6. If thou be wise, and consider well thy case, thou wilc never yield

yield so cowardly to grief, for any aduersitie that befalleth thee, but rather rejoice and give thanks: yea to account this thy onely joy, that afflicting thee with sorrows, I do not spare thee. As my Father hath loved me, I also love you, said I unto my beloved Disciples, whom certainly I sent not to temporall joyes, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idlenesse, but to labours: not to rest, but to bring much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember these words.

C H A P. XXXI.

*Of the contempt of all creatures,
to find our Creatour.*

Lord, I stand yet in need of great grace, if I must go so farre as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdeth me, I cannot flee freely unto thee. He desired to flee with great liberty that said. Who will

will give me wings like a dove, and I will flie and rest? What thing more quiet then a simple eye? And what more free then he that desirereth nothing upon earth? Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himself, and to remain in excessse of mind: and consider that thou, who art the maker of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee. And unlesse a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of mind attend unto divine things. And for this cause there are so few contemplative men to be found, for that few can wholly sequester themselves from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is necessary to lift up a soul, and to carry it above it self. And unlesse a man be lifted up in spirit, and delivered from all creatures, and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth, and whatsoever he hath, is of little account.

count. Long shall he be little, and lie in earthly basenesse, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one onely unmeasurable and eternall good. For whatsoever is not God is nothing, & ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference between the wisdome of a spirituall and devout person, and the knowledge of a learned & studious Clerk. Farre more noble is that learning, which floweth from above, from the divine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour not to exercise those things that are required thereunto. It is a great hinderance, that we rest in signes and sensible things, and have little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are led, nor what we pretend, we that seem to be called spirituall, that we take so much pains, and so great care for transitorie

sitory and base things, and scarce or seldome think of our own inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4. Alas, presently after a sleight recollection we break forth, and weigh not our words with diligent examination. We mind not where our affections lie, nor bewail the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. For all flesh had corrupted her way, and therefore did that generall floud ensue. Sith our inward affection then is much corrupted, it must needs be that our action proceeding thereof, be corrupted as a signe of the want of inward vigour. From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We ask how much one hath done: but how virtuous his actions are is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautifull, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poor he is

is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and spirituall, is sel-dome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth her-self to the inward virtues. That is often deceived: this hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceived.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of deniall of our selues, and for-saking all our affections.

SONNE, thou canst not possesse perfect liberty, unlesse thou wholly denie thy self. All such as be lovers of themselves, are bound in fetters, they are covetous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertain to Jesus Christ; but often-times devising, and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish, that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and complete word. Forsake all, and thou shalt find all. Leave thy in-ordinate

ordinate desires, and thou shalt find rest. Consider this well, and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2. Lord, this is not one dayes work, nor childrens sport: yea in this short sentence, all the perfecti-
on of Religious persons is inclu-
ded. Sonne, thou must not go
back, nor straight-wayes be de-
jected when thou hearest the way
of the perfect, but rather be stirred
up to more worthy and noble at-
tempts, or at least to conceive an
earnest desire thereof. I would it
were so well with thee, and thou
wert come so farre, that thou wert
no longer a lover of thy self, but
didst stand meerly at my back, and
at his whom *I* have appointed a
Father over thee, then thou
shouldst exceedingly please me and
all thy life would passe away in
joy and peace. Thou haft yet ma-
ny things to forsake, which unlesse
thou wholly resigne over unto me,
thou shalt not attain to that which
thou

thou desirest. I counsell thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou maiest become rich, that is, heavenly wisdome, which treadeth under foot all base and earthly things. Set little by the wisdome of this world, and esteem not of the contentment of men, nor thine own fancies.

3. I said that thou shouldest buy the mean and base things, with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteem. For true heavenly wisdome seemeth very base, and of small account, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemeth not highly of it self, nor seeketh to be magnified upon earth, which many praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are far from it: yet is it the precious pearl which is hidden from many.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of Inconstance of heart, and of directing our finall intentions unto God.

SON, trust not to affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou liest, thou art subject to mutability, even against thy will: so that now thou art merry, now sad, now quiet, now troubled, now devout, now distracted, now diligent, now idle, now heavy, now light. But he that is wise, and well instructed in spirit, remaineth alwaies one in the midest of these changes, not heeding what he seeketh in himself, or which way the wind of mutability bloweth: but that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought, to the most perfect and best end. For so he may continue one, and the self same, without any change in the midest of so many sundry chances, directing alwaies the sincere eie
of

of his intention unto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly doth he passe through the variety of many contrary waves. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blind, for it quickly looketh upon some delight, some object that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemish of seeking himself. So the Jews in times past came into Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of the intention therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed unto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly objects.

C H A P. X X X I V.

*That God is sweet above all things,
and in all things to him that
loveth.*

BEhold my God, and all things ! What would I have more, and what can I desire more happy ? O sweet and comfortable word ! but to him that loveth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things ! Enough is said to him that understandeth: and it is pleasant to him that loveth, to repeat often. For when thou art present, all things do yield delight, but when thou art absent, all becomes irksome. Thou givest quiet of heart and much peace, and pleasant joy. Thou makest men think well of all, and praise thee in all things : neither can any thing please us long without thee : but if it be pleasant and delightsome, thy grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetnesse of thy wisdome.

2. What

2. What can be distastfull unto him, to whom thou art pleasing? And whom thou delightest not, what can be pleasant? But the wise of this world, and that have their contentment in sensuall things, cannot attain to thy wisdom, for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. But they that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise: for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholly refer unto the praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great is the difference, between the sweernes of the Creator, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of uncreated and created light.

3. O everlasting light, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightness from above,

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above, and pierce the most inward
corners of my heart : purifie, re-
joyce, clarifie and quicken my spi-
rit with all the powers thereof,
that I may cleave unto thee with
excesse of unspeakable joy. O when
will that blessed and desired hour
come, that I may be filled with
thy presence, and thou maist be
unto me all, in all things? as long
as this is not granted me, I shall
not have full nor perfect joy.
Alas ! my old man yet liveth in
me, he is not wholly crucified, he
is not perfectly dead, he doth yet
covet strongly against the spirit,
and moveth evil warrs, and suf-
fereth not the Kingdome of my
soul to be in peace.

4. But thou that rulest the
powers of the sea, and asswagest
the motion of the waves, rise and
help me : dissipate the people that
desire war, and destroy them in
thy might, and let thy hand be
glorified : for there is no hope nor
refuge for me, but in thee, my
Lord God,

Chap.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

SON, there is no security in this life : as long as thou livest thou shalt alwaies have need of spirituall armour. Thou livest among enemies, and art assaulted on all sides : if therefore thou defendest not thy self on every side with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long unwounded. Moreover if thou fix not thy heart on me, with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not sustain the heat of this battail, nor get that victorious crown, which they have that are in glory. Thou oughtest therefore manfully to go through all, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstandeth thee. For to him that overcometh is given Manna ; and to the negligent is left much wo.

2. If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou then attain

to

to everlasting rest ? Give not thy self to much ease, but to much patience. Seek true peace, not in earth, but in heaven ; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the love of God ; willingly to undergo whatsoever labours, to endure whatsoever griefs, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts : these help to the attaining of virtue : these try a Novice of Christ, these make a heavenly crown. I will give an everlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3. Thinkest thou, that thou shalt alwaies have spirituall consolations at will? My Saints had not so, but many afflictions, & sundry temptations, and many discomforts: all which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God than

then in themselves: knowing that the sufferings of this time, are not condigne to the deserving of future glory. Wilt thou have that straight wayes, which many after tears, and great labours have hardly obtained? Expect the coming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage: fear not, do not stie, but offer both body and soul for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentifull manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

CHAP. XXXVI.

*Against the vain Judge-
ments of men.*

SONNE, fix thy heart stedfastly on God, fear not the judgments of men, when thy conscience gives testimony of thy justice and innocencie. It is a good and a happy thing to suffer in that sort: neither will it be burthensome to an humble mind, nor to him that

L trust-

trusteth rather in God, then in himself. The most part of men are given to talk much, and therefore little care is to be had of their words: neither is it possible to satisfie all. Though the Apostle endeavoured to please all in our Lord, and made himself all unto all, yet he little regarded that he was judged by humane day.

2. He did for the edification and health of others as much as he could, and lay in him; yet could he not binder, but that he was sometimes judged, and despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knew all, and defended himself with patience, and humilitie against evil tonges, and such as thought vanities and lied, and spake what they listed: Yet sometimes notwithstanding he answered, least the weak might have received scandal by his silence.

3. Who art thou, that searest mortall man? to day he is, and tomorrow he is not seen. Fear God

and the terror of men shall not trouble thee. What harm can the words or injuries of any do thee! he rather hurteth himself then thee: neither can he avoid the judgements of God, be he what he will. Have thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complaining words. And if for the present thou seemest to be troden down, and to suffer shame and confusion without desert, do not repine, neither do thou lessen thy crown by thy impatience, but rather lift up thine eyes to me in heaven. I am able to deliver thee from shame and wrong, and to repay every one according to their works.

C H A P. XXXVII.

*Of a full and pure resignation of
our selves for the obtaining
freedome of heart.*

Onne, leave thy self, and thou shalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to

L 2 thy

thy self, and thou shalt ever gain. For greater grace shall alwaies be given thee, when thou dost perfectly resigne thy self, and not turn back to take thy self again. Lord, how often shall I resigne my self? and wherein shall I forsake my self? Alwaies, and in every thing, as well in little as in great. I do except nothing, but do require that thou be as it were naked and void of all things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, unlesse both within and without, thou be free from all self will? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better shalt thou find thy self: and how much the more fully and sincerely thou doest it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gain.

2. Some there are that resigne themselves, but with some exception; For they put not their whole trust in God, and therefore do

do labour to provide for themselves. Some also at the first do offer all, but afterwards being assailed with temptations, do return again that which they had left, and therefore they go not forwards in the way of virtue. These shall not attain to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of my divine familiarity, unlesse they first make an entire resignation, and offer themselves a dayly sacrifice unto me. For without this can never be obtained the union with me, wherewith my Saints enjoy me.

3. I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same: Forsake thy self, resigne thy self, and thou shalt enjoy internall peace. Give all for all, seek nothing, require nothing, repose thy self purely and with a full confidence in me, and I will give my self unto thee, and darkness shall not cover thee. Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer,

let this be thy desire, that casting off all proprietie; thou maist all naked follow thy naked Saviour Jesus: and dying to thy self, maist live eternally to me. Then shall vain fantasies, evil perturbations, and all superfluous cares flie away: then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

*Of good government in outward
things: and of recourse to
God in dangers.*

SOnne, thou oughtest with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action, or externall busynesse, thou be inwardly free, and master of thy self, and that all things be under thy disposition, and thou not subject to them; that thou maist be Lord and Master of thy actions, not a servant or a hire-ling, but rather a free-man, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the sonnes of

of God, who put the things that are present under their feet, & place their thoughts on that which is eternall: who look on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right, do behold the things of heaven: who suffer not themselves to be drawn to cleave unto them, but rather dispose and use them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remain firm and steadfast in all events, and dost not weigh by the outward appearance, nor with a carnall eye, the things which thou seest and hearest, but presently in every occasion dost enter with Moses into the Tabernacle to ask counsell of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes hear the divine and celestiall oracle, and shalt return instructed of many things both present and to come. Moses had alwaies recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding

of all doubts and obscure questions, and fled to the help of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquitie and dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like manner to fie to the closet of thy heart, earnestly craving the divine favour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therefore was Joshua and the children of Israel deceived by the Gibionites, because they consulted not first with God, but giving too lightly credit to fair words, were deluded with counterfeit piety.

CHAP. XXXIX.

*That a man be not over-earnest
in his affairs.*

Sonne, alwaies commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time: expect my ordination, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good. Lord, I do most willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offered my self with all readineſſe

readinesse of mind to thy divine pleasure!

2. Sonne, oftentimes a man doth earnestly laboure for that which he desireth, and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind, and not to esteem so much of it, as before he did: for mans affections do not long continue fixed on one thing, but do passe from one to another. It is therefore a matter not of least moment, to forsake our selves **even** in the least things,

3. The true spirituall profit of man, consisteth in denying and forsaking of himself: and he that is resigned, liveth in great freedome and security. But the ancient enemie, who alwayes laboureth to withstand the servants of God, omitteth at no time his wonted temptations; but day and night lyeth still in wait to cast the unwary, if he can, into the snare of deceit. Watch therefore and pray, saith our Lord,

L 5 that

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that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

*That man bath no good of himself,
nor any thing whereof he
can glory.*

Lord, what is man that thou
art mindfull of him, or the
sonne of man, that thou vouch-
safest to visit him? What hath
man deserved that thou shouldest
give him thy grace? Lord what
cause have I to complain, if thou
forsake me? O: if thou doest
not that which I desire, what can
I justly say against it? Surely this
I may truly think and say; Lord,
I am nothing, I can do nothing,
I have nothing that is good of my
self, but in all things **I** do fail, and
am defective, and do ever tend to
nothing, unless thou help me, and
doest interiourly instruct me, I
become cold, and am dissolved.

2. But thou, O Lord, art al-
ways

wayes the same, and endurest for ever, always good, just, and holy, doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing all things with wisdome. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to go forwards, do never continue in one estate: for seven different times are changed over me, yet doth it soon turn to the better, when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canst help me without the favour of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be converted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherefore if I could once perfectly forsake all humane comfort, either for the love of devotion, or for mine own necessitie, which inforceth me to seek after thee (for none else can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks

4. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me: but I am mere vanity, and nothing before thee, an unconstant and weak man. Whereof then can I glory? Or why do I desire to be esteemed? Is it not of nothing? And this is most vain. Truly vain glory is an evil plague, and very great vanity: because it draweth from true glory, and robbeth the soul of heavenly grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himself, he displeaseth thee: whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is deprived of true virtue.

5. But true glory, and holy exultation, and joy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himself; to rejoice in thy name, and not in his own virtue, nor to delight in any creature but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy work, not mine: let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens
praises

praises be given. Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoice all the day; but for my self I will not joy, but in my infirmities.

6. Let the Jews seek the glory which one man giveth to another: I will desire this which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinity, to Thee alone be all praise, honour, virtue, and glory of all eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporall Honours.

SONNE, trouble not thy self, if thou seest others honoured and advanced, and thy self contemned and debased. Lift up thy heart unto me in heaven, and the contempt of men in earth will not grieve

grieve thee. Lord, we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanity. If I look well into my self, I cannot say that any creature hath done me wrong, & therefore I cannot justly complain of thee.

2. But because I have often & grievously sinned against thee, all creatures do justly take arms against me: for shame and contempt is due unto me, but unto thee praise, honour, and glory. And unless I do so prepare my self, that I be willing, and do rejoice to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all; I cannot obtain internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightened, nor wholly united unto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

onne, if the peace thou hast with any be grounded on the opinion

opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou recei-
vest in his company, thou shalt e-
ver be unconstant and subject to
disquiet; but if thou have recourse
unto the ever-living and eternall
Truth, a friend going from thee,
or dying shall not grieve thee. The
love of thy friend ought to rest in
me, and for me is he to be beloved,
whoever he be whom thou thin-
kest well of, and is verily dear un-
to thee in this life. No friendship
can avail, or continue without
me; neither is the love true and
pure, which they have, whose
hearts are not joyned together by
me. Thou oughtest to be so dead
to such affections of beloved
friends, that (forasmuch as apper-
taineth unto thee) thou shouldest
wilt to be without all company of
men. Man approacheth so much
the nearer unto God, by how much
the further off he departeth from
all earthly comfort: so much the
higher also he ascendeth unto
God,

God, by how much lower he descendeth into himself, and how much the baser he is in his own conceit.

2. But he that attributeth any good unto himself, hindereth the coming of Gods grace into him. For the grace of the holy Ghost, ever seeketh an humble heart. If thou couldest perfectly annihilate thy self, and purge thy self of all created love, then should there flow into thee great abundance of my grace. When thou castest thy eyes on creature, the sight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learn to overcome thy self in all things, for the love of thy Creatour, and then shalt thou be able to attain to heavenly knowledge. How little soever it be, if it be inordinately loved and regarded, it defileth the soul, and hindereth the enjoying of the chiefeſt good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vain and secular Knowledge.

SON, let not the faint speeches and subtle sayings of men move thee, for the Kingdome of God consisteth not in words, but in virtue. Observe well the words which I speak ; for they inflame the heart, and enlighten the mind, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Do thou never read to shew thy self learned or wise : but labour to mortifie thy vices, for that will profit thee more, then the knowledge of many hard and difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt have read and known many things, thou oughtest ever to return to one beginning. I am he that teacheth man all knowledge : and do give to little ones a more clear understanding, then can be taught by man. He therefore, to whom, I speak, shall quickly be wise, and shall

shall profit much in spirit. Wo be to them that inquire many curious things of men, and do little desire to know the way how to serve me. The time will come, when the Master shall appear, Christ the Lord of Angels, to hear the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one: and then he will search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darknesse shall be laid open, and the inventions of tongues, shall be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant do raise up the humble mind, to understand more reasons of the everlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten years study in schools, I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to loath things present, to seek the everlasting, to delight in the things that are eternall,

naill, to flie honours, to suffer scandals, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things fervently to love me.

4 For one by loving me entirely, he learned divine things, and spake wonders: he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtleties. To some I speak ordinary things, to others things more especiall: to some I appear sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reveal mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teacheth not all men alike. For I am the internall teacher, I am the Truth, the searcher of the heart, the understander of thoughts, the setter forwards of good works, distributing to every one according to my will.

CHAP. XLIII.

*Of not drawing outward things
to our selves.*

Sonne, in many things thou oughtest to be ignorant, and esteem thy self as dead upon earth; and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou must also passe over many things with a deaf ear, and rather think of that which appertaineth to thy peace. It is more profitable to turn thine eyes from the sight of unpleasing things, and to leave unto every one his own opinion, then to strive with contentious words. If thou standest well with God, and considerest his judgements, thou shalt the more easily yield to the will of others.

2. O Lord, to what an estate are we come! Behold, we bewail a temporall losse, and for a little gain we toyl, and spare no labour, and the spirituall damage of

of our soul is forgotten, and hardly at length called to mind. That which little or nothing profiteth, is alwayes remembred, and that which is chiefly necessarie, is negligently passed over, because mans nature carrieth him to externall things; and unlesse he quickly return unto himself, he lieth drowned in them with delight.

C H A P. X L V.

That credit is not to be given to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

Help me, Lord, in my tribulation: for vain is the defence of man. How often have I been deceived, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure: And how often have I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vain therefore to trust in men, but the safetie of the just, O Lord, is in thee. Blessed be thou my God, in all things that befall us. We are weak

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weak and inconstant, quickly de-
ceived, and soon changed.

2. Who is he, that is able so
warily to keep himself, that he ne-
ver fall into any deceit or doubt?
But he that trusteth in thee O
Lord, and seeketh with a pure
heart, doth not easily fall, and if
he fall into any tribulation, be he
never so much enthralled, yet he
shall quickly be delivered or com-
forted by thee, for thou wilt not
forsake him for ever, that trusteth
in thee. The friend is rare to be
found, that continueth faithfull
in his friends distresse: but thou,
O Lord, thou alone art faithfull
at all times, and there is none like
unto thee.

3. O how wise was that holy
soul that said: My mind is firmly
settled, and grounded in Christ!
If it were so with me, then would
not humane fear so easily trouble
me, nor words move me. Who
can foresee all things? Who is
able to beware before hand, of fu-

ture

ture evils? If things even foreseen do oftentimes hurt us, how can things unlock'd for, choose but wound us grievously? But why did I not provide better for my self, miserable wretch? Why also have I so easily given credit to others? But alas, we are men, and God knoweth, weak and frail men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom shall I give credit Lord? to whom but to thee? Thou art the truth that neither doest deceive, nor canst be deceived. And on the other side, every man is a liar, weak, unconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words: and therefore we must not easily give credit even to that, which in outward shew seemeth at the first a certain truth.

4. O with how great wisdome hast thou warned us to take heed of men! And because the enemies of man are his familiar and domesticall acquaintance, not to trust,

trust, if one should say: Behold here, or behold there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly: Be wary, saith one, be wary, keep unto thy self what I tell thee: and whilst I hold my peace, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desireth should be secret, but presently discloseth me and himself, and goeth his way. From such tales, and such improvident people, protect me Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such errors. Give me grace my God to observe truth, & constancy in my words, & remove farre from me a deceitfull tongue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all means to avoid.

5. O how good and quiet a thing it is to be silent, and not to talk of others, nor to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard; to lay ones self open to few; always to seek after

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after thee, the beholder of the hearts; not to be carried about with every wind of words, but to desire that all things both within and without, be accomplished according to thy will and pleasure. How secure is it for the keeping of heavenly grace, to flie the sight of men? And not to seek those things that seem to cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and increase of fervour.

6. To how many hath virtue known and over-hastily commended, been hurtfull? How profitable hath grace been, kept with silence in this mortall life; which is nothing but a perpetuall temptation and a warfare?

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in God, when evil words arise.

SONNE, be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are words

but words? They passe through the aire, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thy self: if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly, at least for God. It is a small mattet to suffer sometimes a few words, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure stripes. And why do small matters go to thy heart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardest men more then thou oughtest? Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therefore seekest shadows of excuses.

2. But look better into thy self and thou shalt see, that the world yet liveth in thee, and a vain desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled and reproved for thy faults, it is surely evident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent ear to

my words, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand words spoken by men. Behold, if all should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously invented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferest it to passe, and madest no reckoning at all of it ? Could all those words pluck as much as one hair from thy head ?

3. But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved with every little dispraise, when as he that trusteth in me, and confideth not in his own judgement, shall be free from humane fears. For I am the Judge, and the discerner of all secrets. I know how the matter passed, I know him that offereth the injury, and him that suffereth it. From me hath this word proceeded, this hath happened by my permission, that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed. I shall judge the guilty and the innocent; but by secret judgement I would

4. The testimonie of men oftentimes deceiveth; my judgement is alwayes true it shall stand, and not be overthrown. It is commonly hidden and secret, and not known in every thing but to few; notwithstanding it never erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish it seemes not right. Men ought therefore to return to me in every judgement, and not to stand in their own opinions. For the just man will not be troubled, whatsoever happeneth unto him for God: & if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither will he vainly be glad, if by others he be with reason excused. For he considereth that I am he that searcheth the heart and reins, and do judge not according to the outward face nor humane appearance. For that is oftentimes found culpable in my sight, that in the judgement of men is commendable.

§. O

5. O Lord my God, the just Judge, strong and patient, thou knowest the traitie and perversitie of man, be thou my strength, and all my trust, for mine own conscience sufficeth me not. Thou knowest that which I cannot reach unto, and therefore in every reprehension, I ought to have submitted my self, and to have born it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me again grace of greater sufferance. For thy boantifull mercie is more available to me for the obtaining of pardon, then my conceived justice, for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justifie my self, for if thy mercie be away, no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

CHAP. XLVII.

*That all grievous things are to be
endured for life ever-
lasting.*

SONNE, let not the pains dismay thee which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou discomforted for the tribulations which do befall thee ; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events. I am able to reward thee above all measure. Thou shalt not long toil here, nor alwayes be oppressed with grief. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy evils. There will come an hour, when all labour & trouble shall cease. Little and short is all that passeth away with time.

2. Do as thou doest, labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourn, observe silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully ; life everlasting is worthy of all these, and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day

day which is known unto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but everlasting light, infinite brightness, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? nor cry, Wo be unto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged: for death shall be thrown down, & health shall be without decay, no anxiety, blessed joy, sweet and glorious company.

3. O, if thou hadst seen the everlasting crowns of the Saints in heaven, and with how great glory they now rejoice, who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed unworthy of life it self; truly thou wouldest presently humble thy self even unto the earth: and wouldest rather seek to be under the feet of all, then to have command so much as over one: neither wouldest thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but ra-

ther rejoice to be afflicted for God, & esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, & didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy heart; how durst thou so much as once to complain? Are not all painfull labours to be endured everlasting life? It is no small matter to loose or to gain the kingdome of heaven. Lift up thine eyes therefore unto heaven; behold, I and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now rejoice, now are comforted, now are secure, now do rest, & shall remain with me everlastingly in the kingdom of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the everlasting day, and shortnesse of this life.

O Most blessed mansion of the heavenly citie! O most cleare day of Eternity, which night ob-

scu-

scureth not, but the highest truth truth ever enlighteneth; day ever pleasant, ever secure, & never changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appear, & all these temporal things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glistering with everlasting brightness, but to those that are pilgrims upon earth, it appeareth onely a far off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The inhabitants of heaven do know how joyfull that day is; but the banished children of Eve bewail the bitterness and tediousnesse of this. The dayes of this life are short and evil, full of sorrow and anguish, where man is defiled with many sins, incumbred with many passions, disquieted with many fears, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errors, worn away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakened with delights, tormented with want.

M 5 3. O

3. O when shall these evils be
at an end ! When shall I be deli-
vered from the miserable bondage
of sin ! When shall I think, O Lord
of thee alone ! When shall I per-
fектly tejoyce in thee ! When shall
I be free from all impediments in
true libertie, without all grief of
mind and bodie ! When shall I
have firm peace, peace secure and
without trouble, peace within and
without, peace every way assured !
O good Jesu, when shall I stand
to behold thee ! When shall I con-
template the glory of thy King-
dome ! When wilt thou be unto
me all in all things ! O when shall
I be with thee in thy Kingdome,
which thou hast prepared for thy
beloved, from before all worlds !
I am like a poore banished man in
the land of mine enemies, where
there are daily warres, and great
misfortunes.

4. Comfort my banishment, al-
swage my sorrow, for my whole
desire sendeth up sighs unto thee:

For

For all is burdensome to me, whatsoever this world offereth for my comfort. I desire familiarly to enjoy thee, but I cannot attain unto it. I would gladly fix my heart to the things of heaven, but temporall cares and unmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be above all things, but to my flesh I am enforced to be subject against my will. Thus unhappy man that I am, I fight against my self, and am become grievous to my self, whilst my spirit seeketh after the things that are above, and my flesh that which is below.

5. O what I inwardly suffer when in mind I consider heavenly things, & presently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly phantasies present themselves before me! My God, be not far from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy servant. Cast forth thy lightning and disperse them : send out thy darts and break all the phantasies of my enemy. Gather

ther my senses together unto thee: make me forget the things of this world: grant me grace to cast away speedily the phantasies of vices. Succour me, O everlasting truth, that no vanity may move me. Come heavenly sweetnesse, and let all impurity flie from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me as often as I think upon any thing else besides thee in prayer. I truly confess, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions: for oftentimes I am not there where I do corporally stand or sit; but rather there whither my thoughts do carrie me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my affection is. That quickly occurreth unto me which is naturally delightsome, and by custome pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art truth it self, hast plainly said, Where thy treasure is, there is also thy heart. If I love heaven,

I willingly think of heavenly things. If I love the world, I rejoice at the felicity of the world, and grieve for the adversitie thereof. If I love the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those things, that are pleasing to the flesh. If I love the spirit, I delight to think of spirituall things. For whatsoever I love, thereof do I willingly speak, and hear, and carry home with me the forms and representations thereof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, O Lord, forsaketh all creatures; that violently resisteth nature, and out of the fervour of spirit crucifieth the concupisences of the flesh: that with a clear conscience, he may offer sincere prayers unto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall quiers, all earthly things, outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

*Of the desire of everlasting life,
and how great rewards are pro-
mised to those that fight
valiantly.*

Sonne, when thou perceivest the desire of everlasting blisse to be given thee from above; desirest to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maist without shadow of any interchange behold my light; open thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire. Give great thanks to the heavenly goodncile, that dealeth with thee so favourably, visiteth thee mercifully, stirreth thee up fervently, holdeth thee up powerfully, least through thine own weight, thou fall down to the vanities of the earth. Neither doſt thou obtain this by thine owa thought or endeavour, but by the onely favour of heavenly grace and divine bounte, that thou maill profit in virtue, and obtain greater

greater humilitie, and prepare thy self to future battels, and endeavour to cleave unto me, with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve me with a fervent desire.

2. Sonne, fire often burneth, but the flame ascendeth not up without smoke: so likewise the desires of some men are earnestly carried to heavenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therefore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God, that which they so earnestly request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire, which with such importunity thou presentest unto me. For that is not pure and perfect, which is infected and defiled with the love of thine own proper commoditie and interest.

3. Ask not that which is delightsome and profitable to thee, but that which is gratefull to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou judgest aright, thou oughtest

oughtest to preferre and follow my appointment, rather then thine own desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, and have heard thy often grones. Now thou wouldest be in the freedome of the glory of the Sonnes of God: now doth the everlasting habitation, and the heavenly Countrey full of joy, delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to wit, of warre, time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefeſt good, but thou canſt not attain it for the preſent. I am he, ſaith our Lord, expect until the kingdome of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tried upon earth, and to be exercized in many things. Comfort ſhall be ſometimes given thee, but abundant fulneſſe thereof ſhall not be granted. Take courage therefore, and be conſtant as well in doing, as in ſuffering things contrary to

nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must often times do that which thou wouldest not, and leave undone that thou wouldest do. That which is pleasing to others, shall go well forwards, that which thou wishest, shall not speed. That which others say, shall be nothing regarded. Others shall ask, and shall receive, thou shalt ask and not obtain.

5. Others shall be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shall be no speech, to others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing. At this nature will sometimes repine, and it is much if thou endurest it with silence. In these and such like, a faithfull servant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can denie and overcome himself in all things. There is scarce any thing, wherein thou hast such need to mortifie thy self, as in seeing and suffering those things that are con-

contrary to thy will, especially when that is commanded, which seemeth unto thee inconvenient, or to little purpose. And for that thou being placed under authority, darest not resist a higher power, therefore it seemeth hard unto thee, to walk at the beck of another, and to leave wholly thine own opinion.

6. But consider, Sonne, the fruit of these labours, the end near at hand, and the reward above all measure, and thou shalt receive no grief thereby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will which now thou willingly forfakest, thou shalt alwaies have thy will in heaven. There thou shalt have all that thou wilt, or canst desire, there thou shalt enjoy all good, without fear of losing it: there shall thy will be ever one with me; it shall desire nothing strange or private; there no man shall withstand thee, no man complain of thee, no man hinder

hinder thee, nothing come against thee: but all things desired shall be there together present, and delight thy whole desire, and fulfill it to the highest degree: there I will give thee glory for the reproach which here thou sufferedst; a garment of praise, for former grief; for the lowest place, a seat of an everlasting Kingdome; there shall the fruit of obedience appear, the labour of penance rejoice, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therefore, bow thy self with great humilitie under the hands of all, and regard not who said, or commanded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superior, or thy Inferior, or thine equal, require any thing of thee, or do insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that, let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand

thousand thousand times; but do thou neither rejoice in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thy self, and in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwayes glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

*How a desolate person, ought
to offer himself into the
hands of God.*

Lord God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for ever blessed, because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest, is good. Let thy servant rejoice in thee, not in himself, nor any thing else, for thou alone art the true gladnesse, thou art my hope and my crown, thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord. What hath thy servant, but what he hath received from thee, even without any desert of his? Thine is all that thou

thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made. I am poor, and in labours from my youth: and sometimes my soul is heavy even unto tears, sometimes also it is troubled in it self, by reason of passions which rise against her.

2. I desire the joy of peace, I crave the peace of thy children, that are fed by thee in the light of comfort. If thou give peace, if thou infuse holy joy, the soul of thy servant shall be full of heavenly sweetnesse, and shall become devout in thy praise: but if thou withdraw thy self (as very often thou art wont) he will not be able to runne the wayes of thy commandments, but rather he boweth his knees and knocketh his breast, for that it is not with him, as it was yesterday, and the day before, when thy light shined upon his head, and he was protected under the shadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father and ever to be praised, the houre is come, that thy servant is to be proved! Behold Father, it is fit, that in this houre thy servant suffer some-thing for thee. O Father worthy of eternall honour, the houre is come, which from all eternity thou didst foreknow should come: that for a short time thy servant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly live for ever with thee: he should be a little despised, and humbled, and made as an abject in the sight of men, and much afflicted with passions and infir-mities, that he may rise again with thee, in the rising of new light, and be clarified in heaven. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt have it so: and this is fullfilled which thy self hast com-manded.

4. It is grace and a favour to thy friend to suffer, and to be af-flicted in the world for the love of thee, how often soever, and by whom.

whomsoever thou permittest it to fall upon him. Without thy counsell and providence, and without cause, nothing is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy righteous judgements, and cast away all haughtiness of heart and presumption. It is profitable to me, that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek to thee for comfort, then to men. I have learned also hereby, to dread thy inscrutable judgement, that afflicteth the just with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

5. I give thee thanks, that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hast worn me away by bitter stripes, inflicting sorrows, and sending griefs, within and without. There is none under heaven that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly Physician of souls, that strikest and healest, bringest into hell, and drawest

drawest out again : let thy correction be upon me, and let thy rod instruct me.

6. Behold, beloved Father, I am in thy hands, I bow my self under the rod of thy correction: let my neck and shoulders, feel the stripes of thy chastisement, that my crookednesse may be conformed to thy will. Make me a devout and humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont well to do, that I may be ready at every beck of thy divine pleasure. I commend my self and all mine unto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked here, then hereafter. Thou knowest all and every thing, and there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good,

good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sins. Do with me according to thy desired pleasure, and despise not my sinfull life, better and more clearly known to none, then to thee alone.

7. Grant me, Lord, to know that which is to be known; to love that which is to be beloved, to praise that which pleaseth thee most, to esteem that which is precious unto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight: suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the exteriour eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant mens but to determine of visible & spiritual things with a true judgement, and above all things ever to search after thy will and pleasure.

8. The senses of men are often deceived in their judgements, the lovers of the world are also deceived in loving onely visible things. What is a man the better, for that

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he is esteemed great by man? The deceitfull man deceiveth the deceitfull, the vain the vain, the blind deceiveth the blind, and one feeble likewise another, whyleft he exalteth and praieth him. For how much every one is in thy sight, so much he is and no more, saith humble S. Francis.

CHAP. L.

*That a man ought to employ himself
in works of humility, when
fervour is wanting for
higher exercise.*

SONNE, thou art notable alwayes to continue in the fervent desire of virtue, nor to perfitt in the high pitch of contemplation, but thou must sometimes of necessarie by reason of originall corruption descend to inferiour things, and bear the burthen of this mortall life, even against thy will and with iksomness. As thou carriest a mortall body, so thou shalt led

trouble and heaviness of heart.

Thou oughtest therefore in flesh, oftentimes to bewail the burthen of flesh; for that thou canst not alwayes persevere in spirituall exercises, and divine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to sive to humble and exteriour works, and to refresh thy self with good and virtuous actions, to expect with a firm confidence my coming and heavenly visitation, to bear patiently thy banishment, and the driesse of thy mind, till thou be visited again by me, and delivered from all anxiety. For, I will make thee forget thy former pains, and enjoy inward quietnesse. I will lay open before thee the pleasant fields of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged heart, thou mayst begin to run the way of my commandments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of this time are not condigne to the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.

N 2 CHAP.

CHAP. LII.

That a man ought to esteem himself unworthy of comfort, and to have deserved stripes.

Lord, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spirituall visitation, and therefore thou deal-est justly with me when thou leavest me poor and desolate. For if I could shed tears like a sea, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserve nothing, but to be scourged and punished; in that I have grievously and often offended thee, and sinned in many things. All things therefore duely considered, I am not worthy even of the least comfort. But thou mild and merci all God, who wilt not that thy works do perish, to shew the riches of thy goodness in the vessels of mercie, even be-yond their desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above humane measure: for thy comforts are not like

like to the vain words of men.

2. What have I done, O Lord, that thou shouldest impart any heavenly comfort unto me? I remember not, that I have ever done any good, but have been alwayes prone to sinne, and slouthfull in my amendment. It is true, and *I* cannot deny it, if *I* should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sinnes, but hell and everlasting fire? I confess in the truth of my heart, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, and it is unsit that I should be remembred amongst thy devout serfervants. And although I be unwilling to hear this, yet notwithstanding for the love of truth, I will lay open my sinnes against my self, that I may the better deserve to obtain thy mercy.

3. What shall I say, being guilty and full of confusion? I can utter out of my mouth no other

N 3 word

word, but this ; I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned, have mercy on me : pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewail my grief, before I go unto the land of darkness, and be covered with the shadow of death. What doest thou require of a guilty and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and so rowfull, and do humble himself for his offences ? In true contrition and humblenesse of heart, is bred a hope of forgivenesse ; a troubled conscience is reconciled again, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent soul, meet together in the holy kisse of peace.

4. Humble contrition for sins is an acceptable sacrifice unto thee, O Lord, favouring much sweeter in thy sight then burning frankincense. This is also the pleasant ointment, which thou wouldest have poured upon thy sacred feet, for thou never despisest a contrite and

and humble heart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our enemy : there is attended and washed away whatsoever uncleanness hath been elsewhere gathered, and whatsoever is defiled.

CHAP. LIII.

That the grace of God is not given to those that favour of earthly things.

SO, my grace is precious, it suffereth not it self to be mingled with external things, nor earthly comforts. Thou oughtest therefore to cast away all hindrances of grace, if thou desire to receive the infusion thereof. Choose therefore a secret place to thy self, love to live alone with thy self, desire the conversation of none: but rather pour out devout prayers unto God, that thou mayst keep thy mind compact, and thy conscience pure. Esteem the whole world

as nothing: preferre my service before all outward things; for thou canst not attend unto me, and be delighted also in transitory vanities. Thou oughtest to leueester thy self from thy acquaintance and friends, and to keep thy mind depriv'd of all temporall comfort. So the blessed Apostle Peter required, that the faithful of Christ should keep themselves as strangers and Pilgrims in this world.

2. O how greater a confidence shall he have at the hour of death, whom no affection to any earthly thing, detaineth in the world. But the weak mind is not yet capable of so retired a heart; neither doth the fleshly person understand the freedome of a recollecte mind. Notwithstanding, if he will be truly spirituall, he ought to renounce as well that which is farre off as that which is nearest unto him, and to beware of no man more then of himself. If thou perfectly overcome thy self, thou shalt with

with more ease subdue the rest. It is a glorious victory to triumph over our selves. For he that keepeth himself subject in such sort, that his sensuality be subdued to reason, and reason in all things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himself, and lord of the world.

3. If thou desire to mount unto this height of perfection, thou must begin manfully, and set the ax to the root, that thou mayest pluck up and destroy thy hidden and inordinate inclination to thy self, and unto all private and earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinately loveth himself) almost all dependeth, whatsoever is wholly to be overcome : which being once overcome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquillity. But for that few endeavour perfectly to die unto themselves, and to forsake themselves wholly, therefore they remain entangled

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in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in spirit above themselves ; but he that desirereth to walk freely with me, it is necessarie that he mortifie all his inordinate affecti-
ons, and not adhere unto any crea-
ture by private love.

CHAP. LIII.

*Of the different motions of Nature
and Grace.*

¶ Observe diligently the mo-
tions of thine own nature, and
my grace, for in very contrary
and secret manner these are mo-
ved, and can hardly be discer-
ed, but by him that is spiritu-
all and inwardly enlightened. All
men desire that which is good,
and pretend some good in all their
words and deeds, and therefore
under pretence of good, many
are deceived. Nature is deceit-
full and seduceth, entangleth, and
deceiveth many, and always
peopleth her self for her end:
but

but grace walketh with great sincerity, and avoideth all shew of evil, pretendeth not deceits, and doth all things purely for God, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly die, nor be kept in, nor overcome, nor be subject to any, nor be subdued: but grace laboureth to mortifie her self, resisteth sensuallity, seeketh to be subject, is willing to be overcome, and will not use her own liberty: she loveth to be kept under discipline, and desirereth not to rule any, but alwaies to live and remain wholly subject unto God, and for God is ready, humbly to bow unto all men. Nature striveth for her own commodity, and considereth what profit she may reap by another: but grace considereth not what is profitable, and cominodious unto her self, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receiveth honour and reverence: but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory unto God.

3. Nature

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace rejoiceth to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. Nature loveth idleness, and bodily rest, but grace cannot be idle, but willingly embraceth labour. Nature seeketh to have those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is mean and base: but grace delighteth in plain and humble things, despiseth not coarse and mean, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and torn. Nature respecteth the things of this world, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for losse, is moved with every little injurious word; but grace thinketh on that, which is everlasting, and cleaveth not to that which fadeth with time; she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with injuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is covetous, and doth more willingly receive then give, she loveth proper and private things;

things ; but grace is pittifull and liberall to all, avoideth singularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to give, then to receive. Nature inclineth to creatures, yieldeth to her own flesh, followeth vanities, and listneth to discourses : but grace draweth unto God, and seeketh after virtues, renouniceth creatures, flieth the world, hates the desires of the flesh, restrains wondring abroad, blusheth to be seen in publik. Nature is willing to have some outward comfort, wherein she may delight her senses, but grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth above all visible things, in the highest good.

5. Nature worketh all for her own gain and profit, she can do nothing freely, but for bestowed benefits : she hopeth to obtain either that which is equall, or better, either praise or favour, and coveteth to have her works and gifts much esteemed : but grace seeketh no

no temporall thing, nor asketh any other reward for her deserts, then God alone, nor desireth more of temporall necessaries, then what may serve her for the obtaining of everlasting glory.

6. Nature rejoyceth to have many friends, and kinsfolks, she glorieth of Noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those that are like her self: but grace loveth her enemies, and is not puffed up with multitude of friends, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is joyned with greater virtue: she rather favoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the powerfull, rejoyceth in the simple, and respecteth not the deceitfull, exhorteth ever the good to labour for the better gifts, and by virtue to resemble the Sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want, and trouble: grace constantly suffreth all kind of need.

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7. Nature turneth all things to her self, striveth and contendeth for her self: but grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed: she ascribeth no good to her self, neither doth she arrogantly presume of her self: she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in every sense and understanding, submitteth her self unto the eternall wisdome and to the divine judgement. Nature coveteth to know secrets, and to hear newes, she will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by the experience of her own senses, she desireth to be known, and to do those things for which she may be praised and admited: but grace careth not for hearing news, nor to understand curious matters, for that all this springeth from the ancient disorder of our corrupt nature, seeing nothing that is new, is durable upon earth. She teacheth therefore to restrain the senses, to avoid

avoid vain pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of every thing and every knowledge, to seek profitable fruit, and the praise and honour of God: she will not have her self nor hers publickly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his gifts, who of meer charity bestoweth all things.

8. This grace is a supernaturall light, and a certain speciall gift of God, and the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of everlasting salvation, which liftest up a man from earthly basenesse, to love things of heaven, and of a carnall, maketh him a spirituall person. How much the more therefore, nature is depressed and subdued, so much the greater grace is infused, and the inward man daily by new visitations, more perfected according to the Image of God.

CHAP. L V.

*Of the corruption of Nature, and
efficacie of divine Grace.*

MY God, who of thy meer goodness haſt created me to thy Image and likenesſe, grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſalvation, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to ſinne, and to the loſſe of my ſoul. For I feel in my flesh the law of ſinne, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive, to obey sensualitie in ma-ny things: neither can I reſiſt the paſſions thereof, unleſſe thy holy grace fervently infuſed into my heart, do affiſt me.

2. Thy grace, O Lord, and great grace is needfull, that nature may be overcome, which is ever prone to evil from her youth. For by Adam the firſt man, it falling and being corrupted by ſinne, the paſſe of this flame hath

hath descended upon all mankind, in such sort, that nature it self which by thee was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and for the infi-
nity of a corrupted nature, for that the motion thereof left unto it self, draweth to evil and abject things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certain spark, lying hidden in ashes. This is naturall reason it self, compaileth about with great darknesse, still retaining power to discern good and evil, and the distance between true and false, although it be unable to fulfill all, that it approveth: and enjoyeth not now the full light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward man, I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandments to be good, just, and holy, reproving also all evil and sinne, and do know that it is to be fled. But in my flesh I serve
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the law of sinne, whilst I rather obey sensuality then reason. Hence it is, that I have a will to do good, but know not how to perform it. For this cause I often purpose many good things, but for that I want grace to help my infirmitie, for a light resistance I go back, and faint. I know the way of perfecti-
on, and see clearly enough what I ought to do, but pressed with the weight of mine own corruption, I rise not unto it.

4. O Lord, how needfull is thy grace for me, to beginne any good work, to go forward, and to accomplish it. For without it I can do nothing, but in thee I can do all things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heavenly grace, without which our own merits are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed! Arts, riches, beau-
ty, and strength, wit, or eloquence, are of no worth with thee, O Lord, without thy grace. For gifts of nature are common to good and

and evil, but the peculiar gift of the elect is grace and love, where- with being marked, they are estee- med worthy of everlasting life. This grace so much excelleth, that neither the gift of prophetic, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation how high soever, is of any esteem without it. Neither faith, nor hope, nor other virtues, are acceptable unto thee without charitie and grace.

5. O most blessed grace, that makest the poor in spirit rich with virtues, and the rich in many bles- sings, humble in heart: come down unto me, replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, leaft my soul should faint with wearinelle, and wither away with drinessse of mind. I beseech thee Lord, that I may find grace in thy sight, for thy grace sufficeth, though other things that nature desireth be wanting. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not fear evils, whilst thy grace

grace is with me: she is my strength, she giveth advice and help: she is stronger then all enemies, and wiser then all the wise.

6. Thy grace is the mistresse of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the solace in affliction: she driveth away sorrow, she expelleth fear, she is the nurse of devotion, the bringer forth of tears. What am I without it, but a rotten picce of wood, & an unprofitable stalk onely meet for the fire? Let thy grace therefore, Lord, alwayes prevent me, and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works, through Jesus Christ thy Soun, Amen.

CHAP. LVI.

*That we ought to denie our
selves, and imitate Christ,
by the Crosse.*

¶ Oane, look how much thou
canst go out of thy self, so much
wilt thou enter into me. As to
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be void of all desire of externall things, maketh inward peace ; so the forsaking of our selves, joyneth us internally to God. I will have thee learn the perfect leaving of thy self unto my will, without contradiction and complaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no living. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow, the truth which thou oughtest to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amissle, the truth which cannot erre, the life which cannot end. I am a most straight way, a supreme truth, a true life, a blessed life, an increated life. If thou remain in me, thou shalt know the truth, and truth shall deliver thee, and thou shalt apprehend everlasting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments : if thou wilt know the truth, believe me.

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If thou wilt be perfect, sell all. If thou wilt be my disciple, denie thy self. If thou wilt possesse a blessed life, despise this present life. If thou wilt be exalted in heaven, humble thy self upon earth. If thou wilt reigne with me, bear the crosse with me. For onely the servants of the crosse, find the way of blisse and true light.

3. Lord Jesu, forasmuch as thy way is narrow, strait and contemptible unto the world, grant me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all worldly contempt. For the servant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple above his Master. Let thy servant be exercised in thy holy life, for there is the health and the true laetitiae of my soul; whatsoever I read or hear besides, doth not recinate or delight me fully.

4. Sonne, now that thou knowest and I have read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfil them. He that hath my commandments

mandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him, and will make him fit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord Jesus, as thou hast said and promisit, so give me grace to deserve, that it be fulfilled. **I** have received the Crosse, I have received it from thy hand, and I will bear it, and bear it till death, as thou hast laid it upon me. Truly the life of a good religious person, is the crosse, and it is a sure guide to heaven. It is now begun, it is not lawfull to go back, neither is it fit to leave that which **I** have undertaken.

5. Let us then take courage my brethren, and go forwards together. Jesus will be with us, for Jesus sake we have undertaken this crosse: for the love of Jesus let us persevere in the crosse. He will be our helper, who is our guide and forerunner. Behold our King goeth before us, who also will fight for

for us: let us follow him chearfully, let us not be dismayed, but be ready to die with courage in the battel, and let us not blemish our glory, by flying from the Crosse.

CHAP. LVII.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he falleth into some defect.

SONNE, patience and humility in time of adversity are more pleasing to me, then much comfort and devotion in prosperity. Why art thou grieved for every little trifle, spoken and done against thee? Although it had been much more, thou oughtest not to have been moved. But now let it passe, it is not the first that hath happened, nor any new thing, neither shall it be the last, if thou live long. Thou art chearfull enough, as long as no adversitie occurreth. Thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words,

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but

but when any tribulation suddenly knocketh at thy door , thou art destitute of counsel, and void of force. See therefore thy great frailtie, which thou often provest in every small occasion. It is notwithstanding permitted for thy good , when these and such like occasions befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst , and if it touch thee, yet let it not deject thee, nor trouble thee long: bear it at least patiently , if thou canst not joyfully. Although thou be unwilling to hear it, and feelest in thy heart some motion of disdain, yet reppresse thy self , and suffer no inordinate word to passe out of thy mouth, which may be a scandal to the weak. The storm which now is raised, shall quickly be appeased, and inward grief shall be asswaged by the return of grace. I do yet live , saith our Lord , and am readie to help thee , and to give thee greater

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comfort then before, if thou put thy trust in me, and callest devoutly upon me

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy self to greater suffering. All is not lost if thou feel thy self often afflicted, or grievously tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angel. How canst thou look to continue ever in the same state of virtue, when an Angel in heaven hath fallen, and the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that do give healthfull comfort to them that mourn, and do raise up unto my Godhead, those that know their own frailty.

4. Lord, blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet unto my mouth then the honey, and the honeycombe. What should I do in these my so great tribulations and anguish, unless thou didst comfort me with thy holy, sweet, and heavenly speeches? What matter is it, how much and what I suffer,

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so as I may at length attain to the
heaven of blisse ? Grant me a
good end, grant me a happy pas-
sage out of this world. Be mind-
full of me , my God, and direct
me the straight and ready way to
thy everlasting Kingdome. Amen.

CHAP. LVIII.

*Of not searching into high mat-
ters, and into the secret
judgements of God.*

Sonne, beware thou dispute not
of high matters, nor of the se-
cret judgements of God why this
man is forsaken, and he assumed to
so great grace: why also this man
is so much afflicted , and he so
greatly advanced. These things
exceed all humane power, neither
can any reason or discourse of any
man search out the judgement of
God. When the enemy therefore
suggetteth these things unto thee,
or some envious people demand
them of thee, answere that of the

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Prophet: Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgement is right. And again, The judgements of our Lord are true, and justified in themselves. My judgements are to be feared, not to be discussed, for they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of man.

2. In like manner I advise thee not to enquire, nor dispute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdome of heaven. These things oftentimes breed strife and unprofitable contentions: they nourish also pride and vain glory, from whence do usually spring envie and dissensions, whilst one will needs foolishly have this Saint preferred, and the other another. To desire to know and search out such things, is to no purpose, but to displease the Saints of whom they speak. For I am not the God of dissention, but of peace, which

O 3 peace,

peace consisteth rather in true humility, then in exalting our selves.

3. Some are carried with zeal of affection, to love these, or those most, but this love is rather humane then divine. I have made all the Saints, and have given them grace: I have made them partakers of my glory: I know the merits of every one. I have prevented them in the benedictions of my sweetnesse. I foreknew my beloved, before the beginning of the world. I chose them out of the world, they chose not me first. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercie, I led them through sundry temptations, I have sent them great inward comforts, I have given them perseverance. I have crowned their patience.

4. I know the first and last: I embrace all with inestimable love. I am to be prayed in all my Saints: I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one whom I have thus gloriously

riously exalted, and predestinated without any precedent merits of their own. He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my Saints, honoureth not the greatest, for that I made both the less and the greater. And he that dispraiseth any of my Saints, dispraiseth also me, and all the rest in the kingdome of heaven. All are one by the band of charity, they think the same, they will the same, and are all knit together in one perfect band of love.

5. But yet (w^{ch} is much more high) they love me more then themselves and more then their own merits. For being ravished above themselves, and drawn out of the affection of themselves, they tend wholly unto the love of me, in which also they rest, enjoying me with unspeakable glory. Nothing can put them back, nothing preffe them down; for being full of everlasting truth, they burn with the fire of unquenchable charity. Let therfore

320 The following Book III.
carnall and earthly men, that can
affect no other but private Joyes,
forbear to dispute of the state of
Saints They adde & take away ac-
cording to their own fancies, not
as it pleaseth the everlasting Truth

6. There is in many great ig-
norance, specially in those that be
slenderly enlightened, and these
can seldome love any with perfect
spirituall love. They are alwayes
much drawn by a naturall affe-
ction, and humane friendship to
this man or to that, and according
to the experiance they have of
themselves in their earthly affec-
tions, so they frame an imaginati-
on of heavenly things. But there
is an incomparable distance be-
tween the things which the im-
perfect frame in their conceit,
and those which illuminated per-
sons do see by revelation from a-
bove.

7. Beware therefore, my Son, that
thou treat not curiously of these
things, which exceed thy know-
ledge,

ledge, but rather so apply thy endeavour, that thou maist at leaſt have the meanest place in the Kingdome of heaven. And if any one did know which of the Saints exceeded others in Sanctitie, or is eſteemed great in the Kingdome of heaven, what would this knowledge avail him, unleſſe he ſhould thereby humble himſelf the more in my ſight, and itirre up his mind to praife my name with greater fervour. His labour is much more acceptable unto God, that thinketh of the greatneſſe of his ſinnes, and his want of virtues, and how farre off he is from the perfection of Saints; then he that diſputeth of their greatneſſe. It is better to pray to the Saints with devotion, and tears, and to crave their glorious ſuffrages with an humble mind, then to ſearch their ſecrets with vain curioſity.

8. They are well and right well contented, if men could content themſelves and refrain from these

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vain discourses. They glory not of their own merits, for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all to me, who of my infinite charity, have bestowed my blessings upon them. They are replenished with so great love of my God-head, and so superabundant joy, that there is no glory nor happiness, that is, or can be wanting unto them. All the Saints how much the higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and nearer and nearer unto me. And therefore thou hast it written. That they did cast their Crowns before God, & fell down upon their faces before the Lambe, and adored him that liveth for ever.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of God, that know not whether they shall ever be numbered there amongst the least. It is no small matter to be even the least in heaven, where all are great: for that all there shall be

be called and shall be indeed the sonnes of God. The least there shall be great among thousands, and the tinner of a hundred years shall die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heaven, they received this answer. Unlesse you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdome of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdome of heaven.

10. Wo be unto them that disdain to humble themselves willingly with little children. For the low gate of the kingdome of heaven, will not give them entrance. And wo be to the rich, that have their comforts here, for whilst the poor enter into the kingdome of God, they shall be waiting without. Rejoyce you that be humble: and you that be poor, be you glad, for yours is the kingdome of

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of God, if you walk according
unto truth.

CHAP. LIX.

*That all our hope and trust is to
be fixed in God alone.*

Lord, what trust have I in this world? Or what is the greatest comfort, that all things under heaven do yield me? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number? Where hath it been well with me, without thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert present? I had rather be poor for thee, then rich without thee. I rather choose to be a Pilgrime in earth with thee, then to possesse heaven without thee. Where thou art, there is heaven: and there is death and hell, where thou art not. Thou art my desire, and therefore it behoveth me to send forth deep sighes from my heart, and crie and pray unto thee. For I have none

to trust unto, none that can help me in time of necessity, but thee alone, my God Thou art my hope, and my trust ; thou art my comforter, and most faithfull unto me in all my distresses.

2. All men seek their own gain, thou only seekest my salvation and my profit, and turnest all things to my good. Although thou permittest many temptations to assault me, and many adversities to befall me, yet thou ordainest all this to my good and profit, who art wont to prove thy beloved servants a thousand wayes. In which proof thou oughtest no lesse to be loved and praised, then if thou diddest replenish me with heavenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge : in thee I place my tribulation and anguish, for I find all to be weak and unconstant, whatsoever I behold out of thee. For
neithe

neither can many friends avail, nor forcible helpers aid, nor wise counsellours give profitable answer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any secret, or pleasant place defend, if thou thy self do^t not assist, help, comfort, instruct, and keep us.

4. For all things that seem to be ordained for the rest and solace of man, when thou art absent, are nothing, and do bring indeed no joy, nor comfort at all. Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdome, and the most forcible comfort of thy servants, is to trust in thee above all things. To thee therefore do I lift up mine eyes : In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Bless and sanctifie my soul with thy heavenly blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternall glory: and that nothing may be found in the

the temple of thy greatness, that may offend the eyes of thy Majestie. According to the greatness of thy goodness, and multitude of thy mercies, take pittie upon me, and hear the prayer of thy poor servant, who is farre exiled from thee in the land of the shadow of death. Protect and keep the soul of thy servant, amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and by the assistance of thy grace, direct it in the way of peace, to the countrey of everlasting light. Amen.

*The end of the third
Book.*

OF

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The fourth Book.

The voice of Christ.

*A devout Exhortation unto the
blessed Sacrament.*

 Ome unto me all ye
that labour and are
burdened, and I will
refresh you, saith our
Lord. The bread
which I will give, is my flesh, for
the life of the world. Take ye and
eat, this is my body that shall be
delivered for you, Do this for
the

the commemoration of me. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my bloud, remaineth in me, and I in him. The words which I have spoken unto you, are spirit & life.

C H A P. I.

*With how great reverence Christ
ought to be received.*

These are thy words, O Christ, everlasting Truth, though not spoken all at one time, nor written in one and the self same place. Because they are thine and true, they are all thankfully and faithfully to be received by me. They are thine, and thou hast spoken them, and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them for my salvation, I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my heart. These devout words so full of sweetnesse and love, do stir me up, but mine own offences do amaze me, and my impure consci-

conscience driveth me back from the receiving of so great mysteries. The sweetnes of thy words doth encourage me, but the multitude of my sinnes doth oppresse me.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee: and to receive the food of immortality; if I desire to obtain everlasting life and glory. Come, sayest thou, unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. O sweet and lovely word in the ear of a sinner, that thou my Lord God shouldest invite the poor and needie, to receive thy most blessed bodie. But who am I Lord, that I may presume to approch unto thee? Behold, the heavens cannot contain thee, and thou sayest, Come ye all unto me.

3. What meaneth this most pious benignity, and so loving invitation? How shall I dare to come, that know not any good in me,

me, wherenpon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, that have often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and just men do fear thee, and thou sayest, Come ye all unto me. Unlesse thou, O Lord, diddest say it, who would believe it to be true? And unlesse thou didst command it; who would dare to come unto thee? Behold, Noah a just man laboured a hundred years in the building of the Ark, that he might be saved with a few; and how can I in one hours space, prepare my self to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?

4. Moses thy great servant and especiall friend, made an Ark of incorruptible wood, which also he covered with most pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how shall I so lightly dare to receive the Ma-ker of the Law, & the giver of life?

Solo-

Solomou the wisest of the Kings of Israel, bestowed seven years in building a magnificent Temple in praise of thy name, and celebrated the feast of the Dedication thereof eight daies together, he offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices, and set the Ark in place prepared for it, with the sound of trumpets, & of joy: and I the most unhappy and poorest of men, how shall I bring thee into my house, that can scarce spend one half hour devoutly? and I would to God it were once almost one half houre, in worthy and due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they endeavour to please thee, and alas, how little is that which I do? How short time do I spend, when I prepare my self to receive? I am seldom wholly recollect-ed, very seldom altogether free from distraction, and yet surely no undecent thought should occurre in the presence of thy Deity, nor any creature draw me unto it: for

for I am not to harbour an Angel, but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference between the Ark and the Reliques thereof, and thy most pure body with his unspeakable virtues: between those legall sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement of all ancient Sacrifices. Why therefore do I not become more fervent in thy venerable presence? Wherefore do I not prepare my self with greater care to receive thy sacred gifts, sith those holy ancient Patriarches and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with the whole people, have shewed so great zeal of devotion to thy divine service?

7. The most devout King David, danced before the Ark of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past upon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalms, and appointed

them

them to be sung with joy: himself also oftentimes played upon the harp. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost, he taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole heart, and with pleasant voices, every day to blesse and praise him. If so great devotion was then used, and such memory of divine praise before the Ark of the Testament, what reverence and devotion is now to be performed by me, and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most pretious body of Christ?

8. Many go to sundry places to visit the reliques of Saints, and are astonished when they hear of their miraculous works: they behold the spacious buildings of their Churches, and kisse their sacred bones wrapped in silk and gold. And behold, thou art near present with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the maker of all things, and Lord of Angels.

gels. Oftentimes in those devotions there is but curiositie of men, and noveltie of the beholders in the seeing of such sights, and little fruit of amendment is gotten thereby, especially where there is so unconstant wandring without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the altar, thou art present my Lord, God and Man, Christ Jesus, where also plentifull fruit of everlasting salvation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily and devoutly received. No levitie, no curiositie, or sensualitie draweth unto this, but firm faith, devout hope, and sincere charitie.

9. O God the invisible Creator of the world, how wonderfully doest thou deal with us! how sweetly and graciously doest thou dispose of all things with thy elect, to whom thou offerest thy self to be received in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth all understanding of man: this chiefly draweth the hearts

hearts of the devout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithfull servants that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, often-times receive great grace of devotion, and love of virtue.

10. O admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which onely the faithfull of Christ do know but the unfaithfull, and such as are slaves unto sinne, cannot conceive nor feel. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is given, and lost virtue is restored in the soul, and beauty disfigured by sinne, returneth again. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of devotion, which is here given, not onely the mind, but the weak body also feeleth great increase of strength.

11. Our coldnesse and negligence surely is much to be bewailed and pittied, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receive Christ, in whom all the

hope

hope and merit of those that are to be saved doth consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption, he is the comfort of passengers, and the everlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therefore to be lamented, that many do so little consider this comfortable mystery, which rejoiceth heaven, and preserveth the whole world. O blindness & hardnes of mans heart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatness of so unspeakable a gift, but rather comes by the daily use therof, to regard it little or nothing

I 2. For if this most holy Sacrament should be celebrated in one p'ace onely, and consecrated by one onely Priest in the world, with how great desire dost thou think, would men be affected to that place, and what esteem would they have of such a Priest of Almighty God, by whom they might enjoy the consolation of these divine mysteries? but now there are many Priests, and Christ is offered

338 The following Book IV.
up in many places, that so the grace
& love of God to man, may appear
so much the greater, how much the
more this sacred Cōmunion is cō-
mon through the world, thanks be
unto thee, good Jesu, everlasting
Pastour of our souls, that hast
vouchsafed to refresh us poor & ba-
nished men, with thy precious Bo-
dy and Bloud, and to invite us to
receiving of these mysteries with
the words of thy own mouth, say-
ing: Come unto me all ye that la-
bour and are burdened, and I will
refresh you.

CHAP. II.

*That great goodnessse and charity
of God is bestowed upon man
in this Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

PResuming of thy goodnessse and
great mercie, O Lord, being
sick, I approch unto my Saviour,
hungrie and thirstie to the foun-
tain of life, needy to the King of
heaven

heaven, a servant unto my Lord, a creature to my Creatour, desolate to my mercifull comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchsafest to come unto me? Who am I that thou shouldest give thy self unto me? How dare a sinner presume to appear before thee? And thou, how dost thou vouchsafe to come unto a sinner? Thou knowest thy servant, and seest that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this benefit upon him. I confess therefore my unworthiness, and I acknowledge thy goodness: I praise thy mercie, and give thee thanks for this thy unspeakable charity. For thou dost this for thine own goodness, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodness may be better known unto me, thy charity more abundantly shewed, and thy humility more highly commended. Since therefore it is thy pleasure, and hast commanded that it should be so,

this thy bounty is also pleasing to me, and do with that my offences may be no hinderance.

2. O most sweet and bountifull Jesu, how great reverence and thanks, with perpetuall praise is due unto thee for the receiving of thy sacred body, whose worth and dignity no man is able to expresse! But what shall I think of at this time, now that I am to receive this divine Sacrament, and to approch unto my Lord, to whom I am not able to give due reverence; and yet I desire to receive him devoutly? What can I think better and more profitable, then to humble my self wholly before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodnesse above me? I praise thee my God, and will exalt thee for ever, & I do despise, and submit my self unto thee, even unto the depth of my unworthines

3. Behold thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou bowest thy self down unto me, who am not worthy so much

much as to look up nnto thee! Behold thou comest unto me : it is thy will to be with me, thou invitest me to thy banquet. Thou wilt give me the food of heaven, and bread of Angels to eat, which is no other truly then thy self, the lively bread, that descendest from heaven , and givest life unto the world.

4. Behold from whence this love proceedeth? what kind of favour and benignity is this whicn shineth upon us! What thanks & praises are due unto thee for these benefits! O how good and profitable was thy counsel, when thou ordainedst it ! How sweet and pleasant the banquet, when thou gavest thy self to be our food ! How wonderfully thy work, O Lord how powerfull thy virtue, how unspeakable thy truth ! For thou saidst the word, & all things were made ; and this was done which thou commandest.

5. A thing of great admiration,

P 3 and

and worthie of faith, surpassing the understanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God and Man, shouldst be wholly contained under a small form of bread and wine, and shouldst be eaten by the receiver without being consumed. Thou who art the Lord of all things and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in us by means of this thy Sacrament: preserve my heart and body unspotted, that with a chearfull and pure conscience, I may often celebrate thy mysteries, and receive them to my everlasting health, which thou hast chiefly ordained and instituted for thy honour, and perpetuall memory.

6. Rejoyce my soul, and give thanks unto God for so noble a gift, and singular comfort left unto thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou callest to mind this mystery and receivest the body of Christ: so often dost thou work the work of redemption, and art made

made partaker of all the merits of Christ. For the charity of Christ is never diminished, and the greatness of his mercy is never lessened. Therefore thou oughtest alwayes to dispose thy self hereunto by a fresh renuing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentive consideration this great mystery of thy salvation. So great, new, & joyfull it ought to seem unto thee, when thou saiest, or hearest Mass, as if the same day Christ first descending into the womb of the Virgin, were become man, or hanging on the croffe, did suffer and die for the salvation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

Behold, O Lord, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, preparest in thy sweetnesse, for the poor. Behold in thee is all whatsoever I can, or ought to de-

Sire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope, and my strength, my honour, and my glory. Make joyfull therefore this day, the soul of thy servant, for that I have lifted it up to thee my sweet Jesus, I desire to receive thee now with devotion, and reverence. I do long to bring thee into my house, that with Zacheus I may deserve to be blessed by thee, and numbered among the children of Abraham. My soul thirsteth to receive thy body, my heart desirith to be united with thee.

2 Give thy self to me, & it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come unto thee, and receive thee as the onely remedie of my health, least perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of thy heavenly food. For so most mercifull Jesus, thou once didst say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases:

I wil not send them home fasting, least they faint in the way. Deal thou therefore in like manner now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leave thy self in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithfull. For thou art the sweet refection of the soul, and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be partaker and heir of everlasting glory. It is necessary for me that do so often fall & sin, so quickly wax dull and faint, that by often prayers and confession, and receiving of thy sacred body, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my self, least perhaps by long abstaining, I fall from my holy purpose.

3. For man is prone unto evil from his youth, and unless thy divine remedie help him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Communion therefore draweth back from evil, and comforteth in good. For if I be now so often slack, and negligent when I communicate, or say Mass, what would become of me, if I received not this remedie,

P 5 and

and sought not after so great a help? Though every day I be not fit, nor well prepared to say Mass, I will endeavour notwithstanding at convenient times to receive the divine mysteries, and make my self partaker of so great a grace. For this is the onely chief comfort of a faithfull soul, whilst she wandereth from thee in this mortal body, that being mindfull of her God, she often receive her Beloved with a devout mind.

4. O wondersfull benignity of thy mercy towards us, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giver of life to all spirits, dost vouchsafe to come unto a poor soul, & with thy Godhead and Humanity to replenish her hunger! O happy mind and blessed soul, that deserveth to receive, her Lord God, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee to be filled with spirituall joy! O how great a Lord doth she entertain! How beloved a guest doth she harbour! how pleasant

pleasant a companion doth she receive! how faithfull a friend doth she accept! how beautifull and noble a spouse doth she embrace! she embraceth him who is to be loved above all that is beloved, and above all things that may be desired. Let heaven and earth and all their beautie, be silent in thy presence. For what beautie and praise soever they have, it is received from thy bountie, and shall not equall the beautie of thy name, of whose wisdome there is no end.

C H A P. I V.

That many benefits are bestowed upon them that communicate devoutly.

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, prevent thy servant in the blessings of thy sweetnesse, that I may deserve to approch worthily and devoutly to thy holy Sacrament: stirre up my heart unto thee, and deliver

348 *The following* Book IV.
from all heaviness and sloth: vi-
sit me with thy comfort: that I
may taste in spirit thy sweetnesse,
which plentily lieth hid in this
Sacrament, as a fountain. Give
light also to my eyes, to behold so
great a mysterie, and strengthen
me to believe it with undoubted
faith: For it is thy work, and not
mans power, thy sacred institu-
tion, not mans invention. For no
man is of himself able to compre-
hend and understand these things,
which surpasie the understanding
even of Angels. What therefore
shall I unworthy sinner, earth and
ashes, be able to search and com-
prehend of so high and sacred a
mystery?

2. O Lord in sincerity of heart,
with a good and firm faith, and at
thy commandment, I come unto
thee with hope and reverence,
and do verily believe, that thou art
present in the Sacrament,
God & Man. Thy holy pleasure is
I receive thee, and by charity
do

do unite my self unto thee. Wherefore I do recurre unto thy clemency, and do crave speciall grace, that I may wholly melt in thee, and abound with love, & hereafter never admit any externall comfort. For this most high & worthy Sacrament, is the health of the soul and body, the remedy of all spirituall sicknesse : by it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations overcome or weakened, greater grace infused, virtue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still oftentimes doest bestow many benefits in this Sacrament upon thy beloved that receive it devoutly, my God the Protectour of my soul, the strengthener of humane frailty, and the giver of all inward comfort. Thou impartest unto them much comfort against sundry tribulations, and liftest them up from [the depth of their

own

own basenesse, to the hope of thy protection, and doest inwardly refresh and illustrate them with a certain new grace, in such sort, that they who before Cōmunion felt themselves heavie and indisposed, afterwards being strengthened with heavenly meat and drink, do find in themselves a great change to the better. Which thou doest so dispose to thy cleſt, that they may truly acknowledge, and patiently prove, how great their own infirmity is, and what benefit and grace they receive from thee. For they of themselves are cold, dull, and undevout; but by thee they are made fervent, agile, & full of devotion. For who is there that approaching humbly unto the fountain of sweetnes, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetnesse? Or who standing by a great fire, receiveth not some ſmal heat thereby? Thou art a fountain alwaies full and overflowing, a fire ever burning and never decaying.

4. Wherefore, if I cannot draw at the full out of this fountain, nor drink my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduit, that I may draw from thence, at least some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholly away, and perish. And though I be not altogether celestiall, nor so inflamed as the Cherubims and Seraphims, notwithstanding I will endeavour to apply my self to devotion, and dispose my heart to obtain some small spark of divine fire, by humble receiving of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatsoever is hereunto wanting in me, good Jesu, most blessed Saviour, do thou supply for me, most benigne and gracious Lord, who hast vouchsafed to call us unto thee, saying, Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

5. I labour in the sweat of my brows, I am vexed with grief of heart,

heart, I am burdened with sinnes, I am troubled with temptations, I am entangled & opprest with many evil passions, and there is none to help me, none to deliver and save me, but thou, Lord God, my Saviour; to whom I commit my self, and all mine, that thou maist keep me, & bring me to life everlasting. Receive me to the honour and glory of thy name, who hast prepared thy bodie and bloud to be my meat & my drink. Grant Lord God, my Saviour, that by frequenting thy mysteries, my zeal and devotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

*Of the dignity of this Sacrament,
and Priestly function.*

The voice of the Disciple.

IF thou hadst Angelicall puritie, and the sanctitie of S. John Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive, nor handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compass of

of the deserts of men, that man should consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ, and receive for food the bread of Angels. A great mysterie, and great is the dignitie of Priests, to whom is granted that which is not permitted to the Angels. For Priests onely instituted in the Church, have power to celebrate and consecrate the body of Christ. The Priest is the Minister of God, using the words of God, by Gods commandment, and appointment, but God is there the priucipall actour, and invisible worker, to whom is subject all that he pleaseth, and all that he commandeth doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to give more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thine own sense, or to any visible signe. And therefore thou art to come unto this Mysterie with fear and reverence. Consider attentively with thy self, what that is, whereof the Ministry is deli.

354 *The following* Book IV,
delivered unto thee by the imposition
of hands of the Bishop. Behold, thou art made a Priest, and
consecrated to say Mass, see now
that in due time thou offer Sacrifice
unto God faithfully and devoutly, and carry thy self so, as
thou mayst be without reproof.
Thou hast not lightned thy burthen, but art now bound with a
straiter band of discipline, and art
obliged to a more perfect degree of
sanctitie. A Priest ought to be ad-
orned with all kind of virtue, &
to give example of good life to
others. His conversation should
not be according to the ordinary
and common proceedings of men,
but like to the Angels in heaven,
or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Priest clothed in sacred
garments, is the Vicegerent of
Christ, to pray humbly and with
a prostrate mind unto God for
himself and the whole people. He
hath before & behind the signe of
the croffe of our Lord, to the end he
may

may ever remember the Passion of Christ: he beareth the Croſſe before him in the Vefment, that hee may diligently behold the footſteps of Christ, and fervently endeavour to follow them. He is behind marked with the Croſſe, that he may patiently ſuffer for God, whatſoever adverſities ſhall be laid upon him by others. He beareth the croſſe before, that he may lament his own ſinnes: & the ſame he hath also behind, that he may with a compassionate heart bewail the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediatour between God and the ſinner. Neither ought he to ceafe from prayer and holy oblation, till he deſerve to obtain grace & mer- cie. When a Priest doth celebra- te, he honoureth God, rejoyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, help- eth the living, giveth reſt to the dead, and maketh himſelf partaker of all good deeds.

C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

*An Interrogation of the exercise
before Communion.*

The voice of the Disciple.

WHen I weigh thy greatnes, O Lord, and my unworthines, I tremble, and am confounded in my self. For if I come not unto thee, I fly from life; and if I unworthy intrude my self, I incurre thy displeasure. What therefore shall I do my God, my helper, and my counsellour in necessity ?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some brief exercise, suitable to this holy mysterie of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I should reverently and devoutly prepare my heart unto thee, for the profitable receiving of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great and divine a Sacrifice.

C H A P.

CHAP. VII.

Of the discussing of our own conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the Beloved.

Above all things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this Sacrament with great humilitie of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full faith, and a godly desire of the honour of the Divine Majestie. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power, purge & cleanse it with true contrition, and humble confession; so as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdensome unto thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free accessse to these heavenly mysteries. Repent thee of all thy sins in generall, and in particular bewail thy daily offences. And if thou hast time, confess unto God in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy disordered passions.

2. La-

2. Lament and grieve that thou art yet so subject to sensuality, and so addicted to the world, so unmortified in thy passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence, so unwatchfull over thy outward senses, so often intangled with many vain fantasies, so vehemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interiour, so prone to laughter & immodesty, so hard to tears and compunction, so prompt to ease and pleasures of the flesh, so dull to austerity and fervour, so curious to hear news and see vain sights, so slack to embrace that which tends to thine own humiliation and contempt, so covetous of abundance, so niggardly in giving, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speech, so unbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outragious in deeds, so greedy to meat, so deaf to the word of God, so haftie to rest, so slow to labour, so watchfull to tales, so drowsie to watch in the service of God, so hafty

hasty to the end thereof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in saying thy office, so undevout in saying Massie, so dry in receiving, so quickly distracted, so seldom wholly recollected, so suddenly moved to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to judge, so severe to reprehend, so joyfull in prosperity, so weak in adversity, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These and other thy defects confessed, and bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine own infirmitie, make a firm purpose alwayes to amend thy self, and to go forwards in virtue. Then with full resignation, & with thy whole will, offer thy self up to the honour of my name, a perpetuall sacrifice in the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy body & soul unto me, that thou mayst so also deserve to come worthily to offer sacrifice unto God, and to receive profitably the Sacrament of my body.

4. For

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of sins, then to offer up our selves unto God purely and wholly with the oblation of the Body of Christ in the Masse, and in Communion. And when a man shall have done what lieth in him, and shall be truly penitent, as I live, saith our Lord, who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted & liue, I wll not remember his sins any more, but they shall be all forgiven him, and fully pardoned.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse, and resignation of our selves.

The voice of the Beloved.

AS I willingly offered up my self unto God my Father, with my hands stretched forth on the crosse, and my body naked for thy sins, so that nothing remained in me, that

that was not turned into a sacrifice for the appeasing of the Divine wrath; so oughtest thou also to offer up thy self willingly unto me daily in the Masse, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy whole force and desire, in as hearty a manner as thou canst. What do I require of thee more, then that thou resign thy self wholly unto me? Whatsoever thou givest besides thy self, is of little account in my sight, for I seek not thy gift but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to have all things whatsoever besides me; so neither can it please me whatsoever thou givest, if thou offerest not up thy self. Offer thy self unto me, and give thy self and all that thou art for God, and thy offering shall be graciefull. Behold I offered up my self wholly unto my Father for thee, & gave my whole body and bloud for thy food, that I might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine. But if thou abidest in thy self, and doest not offer thy

Q self

self up freely unto my will, thy oblation is not entire, neither shall the union between us be perfect. Therefore a free offering up of thy self into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtain freedome and grace. For this cause so few become inwardly illuminated, & enjoy true liberty of heart, for that they do not resolve wholly to deny themselves. My saying is undoubtedly true. Unlesse one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therefore wish to be mine, offer up thy self unto me with thy whole desires.

C H A P. I X.

*That we ought to offer up our selves
and all that is ours unto God,
and to pray for all.*

The voice of the Disciple.

THine, O Lord, are all things
that are in heaven and in earth.
I desire to offer up my self unto
thee,

thee as a free oblation, and to remain alwayes thine. O Lord, in sincerity of my heart, I offer my self unto thee this day, in sacrifice of perpetuall praise, to be thy servant for ever. Receive me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which in the presence of the Angels invisibly attending here upon thee, that it may be to the health of my soul, and the salvation of all thy people.

2. I offer unto thee, O Lord; all my sinnes and offences, which I have committed in the sight of thee, and thy holy Angels, from the day wherein I first could sinne, to this houre, upon thy holy altar: that thou maist consume and burn them all with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the stains of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore to me again thy grace, which I lost by sinne, forgiving me all my offences, and receiving me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

Q 2 3. What

3. What can I do for my sins, but humbly confess and bewail them, and intreat alwayes for mercy without intermission? I beseech thee, hear me in thy abundant mercy, when I stand before thee, my God. All my sinnes are very displeasing unto me. I wil never commit them any more, but I am sorry, and wil be sorrie for them as long as I live, and am readie to do penance, and to satisfie for them to the uttermost of my power. Forgive me, O God, forgive me my sinnes, for thy holy names sake: save my soul which thou hast redeemed with thy precious bloud. Behold, I commit my self unto thy mercie, I resigne my self over into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodness, not according to my wickednes, & manifold iniquity.

4. I offer up also unto thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctifie it, that thou mayst make it grate-

full

full and acceptable unto thee, and alwaies perfect more and more that which thou haft begun, and bring me also, who am thy slothfull and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the godly desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents and friends, my brethren & sisters, and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to my self or others for thy love, and that have desired me to say Mass and pray for them and all others, whether they be yet alive or already dead; that they all may receive the help of thy grace and comfort, protection from dangers, deliverie from pain, & being freed from all evils, may joyfully give worthy thanks to thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my prayers, and sacrifices, especially for them who have in any thing wronged, grieved, or slandered me, or have done me any damage or

pleasure, and for those also, whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, and scandalized by words or deeds, wittingly, or at unawares: that it may please thee to forgive us all our sinnes and offences one against the other. Take, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, all indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt charity, and weaken brotherly love. Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave thy mercie: give grace unto them that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace, and attain to life everlasting. Amen.

C H A P. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborn.

The voice of the Beloved.

Thou oughtest often to have recourse to the Fountain of grace and of divine mercy, to the Fountain of goodness, and of all piety, that

that thou mayst be cured of thy sinnes and passions, and deserve to be made more strong and vigilant against all temptations and deceits of the devil: The enemie knowing the greatest profit and remedie to consist in the holy Communion, endeavoureth by all means and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithfull and devout persons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to receive the sacred Communion, suffer greatest assaults of the devil: For that wicked spirit (as is written in Job) cometh amongst the sonnes of God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice and impiety, or to make them over-fearfull and perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by subtile assaults, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogether abstain from this divine food, or at least come unto it with lesse devotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his

Q 4 frauds

frauds and malicious suggestions, be they never so filthie and hideous, but all is to be turned back upon his own head. We ought to contemn and scorn him miserable wretch, and not to omit the sacred Communion for his assaults, and the troubles which he raiseth.

3. Oftentimes also an excessive care for the obtaining of devotion, and a certain anxiety for the making of our Confession hindereth us. Follow in these occasions the counsel of the wise, and put away all anxietie and scruple; for it hindereth the grace of God, and overthroweth devotion. Omit not for every small vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receive this holy Sacrament, but go presently to confession, and willingly forgive others, whatsoever offences they have done against thee: and if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and God will willingly forgive thee.

4. What availeth it to delay
con-

confession, and to deferre receiving? Purge thy self with speed, spit out the venome presently, make hast to take a remedie, and thou shalt find it better, then if thou deferredst it long. If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater will fall out, and so thou mayst be hindered a long time from these divine mysteries, and become more unfit. Stirre up thy self, and shake off all heaviness and sloth, with the greatest force and speed thou canst. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in disquietnesse and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments, to withdraw thy self from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to defer communion long; for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulness. Alas, some cold and dissolute people, do willingly delay their confession, & do therefore defer the sacred Communion, least they should be bound to greater watch over themselves. Q 5 5. O

5. O how little charitie and weak devotion have they that so easily omit the recei ving of these holy mysteries ! How happy is he and gratefull to God, who order eth so his life, and keepeth his con science in such purity, that he may be ready and fit to communicate every day, if it were convenient & might be done without note ! If any one sometimes abitain of hum mility, or by reason of some lawfull impediment, he is to be commend ed for the reverence which therein he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldnesse, he must stir himself up, and do what lieth in him, & God will prosper his desire, for the good will he hath to do it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawfull hin drance doth happen, he must al wayes have yet a good will, and lo ving desire to communicate, and so shall he not loose the fruit of the Sacrament : For a devout person may every day & hourc profitably and

and without let, receive Christ spiritually: & yet on certain daies, and at times appointed, he ought to receive Sacramentally with a reverned desire, the bodie of his Redemer, and rather seek the honour and glory of God, then his own comfort. For he communicateth mystically, & is invisibly fed, as often as he devoutly calleth to mind the mysterie of the Incarnation, and the Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his love.

7. He that prepareth not himself, but when a feast draweth near, and when custome compelleth him thereunto, shall often be unprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himself up as an Holocaust, and burnt-offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate. Be not too long nor too short in saying Masse, but keep the accustomed manner of those, with whom thou livest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others, but to observe the com-

common course according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and rather frame thy self to the profit of others, then to thine own devotion or desire.

CHAP. XI.

*That the Body of Christ, and the
holy Scripture, are most neces-
sarie unto a faithfull
soul.*

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet Lord Jesu, how great is the delight of a devout soul, that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meat offered to be eaten, but thy self her onely beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And verily it would be a great comfort unto me, to poure out tears from the bottom of my heart in thy presence, and with devout Magdalen to wash thy feet with the tears of my cies: but where is this devotion? where is so plenti-
full

fulshedding of holy tears? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole heart should be inflamed and dissolve into tears for joy. For I enjoy thee in the Sacrament really present, although hidden under another form.

2. For to behold thee in thine own divine brightness, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glory of thy Majesty. Thou therefore providest for my weaknesse, in that thou coverest thy self under the Sacrament. I do really enjoy and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heaven, but I, as yet for the time, in faith, they in his proper form, and without shadow. I ought to be contented with the light of true faith, and to walk therein, till the day of everlasting brightness break forth, and the shadows of figures passe away. But when that shall come which is perfect, the use of Sacraments shall cease.

cease. For the blessed in heavenly glory, need not the remedie of Sacraments, who rejoice without end in the presence of God, beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed by his brightnesse into the brightnesse of the incomprehensible Deitie, they taste the word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Whilst I remember these thy wonderfull works, all spirituall comfort whatsoever becometh ver-
y tedious unto me: for that as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no ac-
count of whatsoever I see or hear in this life. Thou art my witnesse, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature give me rest, but thou my God, whom I desire to behold everlastingily. But this is not possible, whilst I remain in this mortall life. Therefore I must frame my self to much patience, and submit my self to thee in all

my

my desires. For thy Saints also, O Lord, who now rejoice with thee in the kingdome of heaven, whilest they lived, expected in faith and great patience, the coming of thy glory. What they believed, I believe; what they hoped for, I expect; whither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy grace. In the mean time I will go forward in faith, strengthened by the examples of the Saints. I have also devout books for my comfort, and for the guide of my life, and above all these, thy most holy body for a singular remedie and refuge.

4. For I perceive two things to be chiefly necessarie for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable unto me. Whilest I am kept in the prison of this bodie, I acknowledge my self to stand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou hast therefore given unto me (weak creature) thy sacred Bodie for the refection of my soul and

and body, and hast set thy word as a light unto my feet; without these two I could not well live. For the word of God, is the light of the soul; and thy Sacrament, the bread of life. These also may be called the two tables, set on the one side and the other, in the store-house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, containing the sacred bread, that is, the precious body of Christ: the other is of the divine law, containing holy doctrine, teaching true faith, and certainly leading to the part of the Temple within the veil, where is the Holy of Holies. Thanks be unto thee, Lord Jesus, light of everlasting light, for thy table of holy doctrine, at which thou servest us by thy servants the Prophets and Apostles, and other Doctors.

5. Thanks be unto the Creator and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charitie to the whole world hast prepared a greater

greater supper, wherein thou hast offered to be eaten, not the mysticall lambe, but thine own most sacred Body and Bloud, rejoicing all the faithfull with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with thy heavenly Cup, in which are all the delights of heaven, and the holy Angels do feast with us, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of Priests, to whom it is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Majestie, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hold him, with their own mouth to receive him, and to administer him to othes! O how clean ought to be those hands! How pure that mouth! How holy the body! How unspotted the heart of the Priests, in whom the Authour of puritie so often entreth! Nothing but holy, no word but chaste and profitable, ought to proceed from the mouth

mouth of the Priest, which so often receiveth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes, that are wont to behold the body of Christ, the hands pure and lifted up to heaven, that use to handle the Creatour of heaven and earth. Unto the Priests especially it is said in the Law: Be ye holy, for that I your Lord God, am holy.

8. Assist us (Almighty God) with thy grace, that we, who have undertaken the office of Priesthood, may serve thee worthily and devoutly in all puritie, and with a sincere conscience. And if we cannot live in so great innocencie as we ought to do, grant us notwithstanding, in due manner to bewail the sins which we have committed, and in the spirit of humtie, and sincere intention, to serve thee hereafter with more fervour.

C H A P. XII.

*That he that is to communicate,
ought to prepare himself with
great diligence.*

The voice of the Beloved.

I Am the lover of purity, and the
giver of all sanctitie. I seek a pure
heart, and there is the place of my
rest. Make readie and adorn for
me a great chamber, and I will
make with thee the Pasche with
my Disciples. If thou wilt have me
come unto thee, and remain with
thee, purge the old leaven, & make
clean the dwelling of thy heart:
shut out the whole world, and all
tumult of vices: sit like a sparrow
solitary upon the house top, and
think of thy offences in the bitter-
nestle of thy soul. For every lover,
prepareth the best & fairest room
for his beloved, and herein is
known the affection of him that
entertaineth his beloved.

2. Know thou notwithstanding,
that the worth of no action
of

of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy self a whole year together, and think on nothing else, but of my mercy and Grace: onely thou art suffered to come to my table like a beggar invited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble himself, and give him thanks. Do what lyeth in thee, and do it diligently, not for custome, nor for necessitie, but with fear and reverence, and hearty affection receive the body of thy beloved Lord and God, who vouchsafeth to come unto thee. I am he that have called thee, I have comanded it to be done, I wil supply what is wanting in thee, come and receive me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion on thee, give thanks to God, for it is given thee, not for that thou deservest it, but because I have mercy on thee. If thou have it not, but rather feel thy self drie,

conti-

continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and give not over untill thou desirē to receive some crum or drop of grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee, neither comest thou to sanctifie me, but I come to sanctifie and make thee better. Thou comest that thou maist be sanctified by me, and united unto me, that thou maist receive new grace, and be stirred up again to amendment. Neglect not this grace, but prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy beloved into thy soul.

4. But thou oughtest not onely to prepare thy self to devotion before Communion, but carefully also to conserve thy self therein, after thou hast received the Sacrament. Neither is the carefull guard of thy self after, lesse exacted, then devout preparation before. For a good guard afterwards, is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining a gain of greater grace, because that mans mind becometh

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cometh very indisposed, if he presently poure himself out to outward comforts. Beware of much talk, remain in some secret place, and enjoy thy God. For thou hast him, whom all the world cannot take from thee. I am he, to whom thou oughtest wholly to give thy self, that so thou maist live hereafter, not in thy self, but in me, without all care.

CHAP. XIII.

That a devout soul ought to desire with her whole heart, to be united unto Christ in the B. Sacrament.

The voice of the Disciple.

How may I obtain this, O Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee as my soul desireth? And that no man may look upon me, nor any creature move me or respect me, but thou alone maist speak unto me, and

and I to thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to banquet with his friend? This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly ~~united~~ unto thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things, and more and more, by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learn to taste of heavenly & everlasting sweetnesse. O Lord God, when shall I be wholly united and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetfull of my self! thou in me, and I in thee, and so grant us both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloved, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soul hath taken pleasure to dwell all the dayes of her life. Thou art my peace-maker in whom is greatest peace; and true rest, without whom is labour and sorrow, and infinite misery. Thou art a hidden God, and thy counsell is not with the wicked, but thy speech is with the humble and simple.

simple of heart. O Lord, how sweet is thy spirit, who to the end, thou mightest shew thy sweetnesse towards thy children vouchsafest to feed them with the most delightsome bread which descendeth from heaven, & is ful of all sweetnesse. Surely there is no other Nation so great, that hath Gods approaching unto them, as thou our God art present to all thy faithfull, unto whom for their daily comfort, and for the lifting up of their hearts to heaven, thou givest thy self to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other nation is there so famous, as the Christian people? or what creature under heaven so beloved, as a devout soul, to whom God himself cometh to feed her with his glorious flesh? O unspeakable grace! O admirable favour! O infinite love singularly bestowed upon man! But what shall I give unto our Lord in return of this grace, for so singular a charitie? There is no other thing

more

more gratefull that I am able to give, then to bestow my heart wholly on my God, and to unite it perfectly unto him. Then shall all my bowels rejoice, when my soul shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say unto me, If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answer him, Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my heart may be united unto thee.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to receive the Bodie of Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

O How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee! When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy Sacrament, O Lord, with great devotion and affection, I am of-

tentimes confounded, and blush within my self, that I come so negligently and coldly to thy Altar, to thy Table of holy Communion: that I remain so dry, & without spirituall motion or feeling, that I am not wholly inflamed in thy presence, my God, nor so earnestly drawn and moved, as many devout persons have been, who out of a vehement desire of receiving, and a feeling affection of heart, could not contain themselves from weeping, but with the desire both of soul and body, they earnestly longed after thee, O God, the lively Fountain, being not otherwise able to temper nor satisfie their hunger, but by receiving thy body with all joy & spiritual greedines.

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a probable argument of thy sacred presence. For these truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so within them, whilst thou, O blessed Jesu, walkest with them. Such desire

desire and devotion, so vehement love & fervency, is oftentimes far off from me. Be mercisull unto me good Jesu, sweet & benigne Lord, and grant me thy poore needy creature, to feel sometimes at least in this holy Sacrament, a little cordiall desire of thy love, that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in thy goodness increased, and that my charity once perfectly enflamed, after the tasting of heavenly Manna, may never decay

3. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to give me the grace I desire, & to visit me in thy bounteous clemency with the spirit of fervour, when it shall please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially devoted unto thee: yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to have this great enflamed desire, praying and craving that I may participate with all such thy fervent lovers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility and denial of our selves.

The voice of the Beloved.

THou oughtest to seek the grace of devotion instantly, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently & confidently, to receive it joyfully, to keep it humbly, to work with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to God, until it shall be his pleasure to come. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thy self, when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion, and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinately for it. God often giveth in a short moment, that which he hath long time denied: he giveth sometimes in the end, that which in the beginning of prayer he deferred to grant.

2. If grace should be always presently given, and at hand ever with

with a wish, it could not be well endured by a weak man. Therefore devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience; yet impute it to thy self, & thy sinnes, when it is not given thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a small matter that hindereth and hideth grace from us, if it be to be called small, and not rather a great matter, that hindereth so great a good. And if thou remove this, be it great or small, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3. For presently as soon as thou givest thy self to God, and seekest not this, nor that, for thine own pleasure or will, but settlest thy self wholly in me, thou shalke find thy self united unto him, and quiet. For nothing will tast so well, and please thee so much, as the will & pleasure of God. Whosoever therefore with a sincere heart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth himself from

all inordinate love, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion: For our Lord bestoweth his blessings there, where he findeth his vessels empty. And how much the more perfectly one forsaketh these basest things, & dieth to himself by contempt of himself; so much the more speedily grace cometh, and entreth in more plentifully, & liftest up the heart that is free, to a higher state of grace.

4. Then shall he see, & abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be enlarged, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into his hand for ever. Behold, so shall the man be blessed, that seeks Almighty God with his whole heart, and takes not his soul in vain. This man deserveth great grace of divine union, in receiving the holy Eucharist, for that he regardeth not his own devotion and comfort, but above all devotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifest our necessities unto Christ, and to crave his grace.

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet and loving Lord, whom I now desire to receive devoutly, thou knowest my infirmity, and the necessity which I endure, with how many sins I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come unto thee for remedie, I crave of thee thy heavenly comfort, and the easse of my pain, I speak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my secrets are open, and who can onely perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what it is, whereof above all things I stand in most need, and how poor I am in virtues.

2. Behold, I stand before thee, poor and naked calling for grace, and craving mercie. Refresh this

R 4 thy

thy hungry & needy creature, give heat unto my coldnesse, with the fire of thy love: give light unto my blindness wth the brightnesse of thy presence. Turn all earthly things unto me, into bitterness, all things grievous and contrary, into patience, all base and created things into contempt & oblivion. Lift up my heart to thee in heaven and suffer me not to wander upon earth. Be thou onely sweet and delightsome unto me frō henceforth for evermore: for thou onely art my meat, & my drink, my love & my joy, my delight & all my good

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholly inflame, burn and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee by the grace of inward union, and melting of burning love! Suffer me not to go from thee hungry & dry, but deal mercifully with me, as thou haſt oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What marvell if I ſhould be wholly en- flamed

flamed by thee, and die in my self-sith thou art fire burning and never decaying, love purifying the heart, and enlightening the understanding?

C H A P. X V I I.

Of burning love & vehement desire to receive Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

With great devotion and burning love, with most hearty affection and fervour I desire to receive thee, O Lord, as many Saints and devout persons have desired thee, when they received thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing unto thee in holiness of life, and most fervent in devotion. O my God, my everlasting love, my whole good, my happiness without end, I would gladly receive with the most vehement desire, & worthy reverence, that any of the Saints ever had, or could feel.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion

tion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had those most sweet inflamed desires: yea, whatsoever also a devout mind can conceive and desire, all that, with greatest reverence, and most inward affection I offer & present unto thee. I wish to desire nothing to my self, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my self & all mine unto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, and my Redeemer. I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise and honour, with such gratitude, worthiness, and love, with such faith, hope, and purity, as thy most blessed Mother the glorious Virgin Marie received, and desired that, when she humbly and devoutly answered the Angel, who declared unto her the mysterie of thy Incarnation, and said, Behold the handmaid of our Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy blessed Forerunner

ner, the most excellent amongst the Saints, John Baptist, chearfully leaped with joy of the holy Ghost, whilest he was yet shut up in his mothers wombe: and afterwards seeing Jesus walking amongst men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection: The friend of the Bridegroom that standeth & heareth him, rejoyceth with joy for the voice of the Bridegroom: so I also wish to be enflamed with great and holy desires, & to offer my self up to thee with my whole heart. Wherefore I offer also and present unto thee the joyes, fervent desires, excesses of mind, spirituall illuminations, & heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the virtues and praises exercised & to be exercised, by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my self, and all such as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maist be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4. Receive, my Lord God, the affecti,

affections of my heart, & the desires of infinite praise and thanks, which according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatnes, are due unto thee. These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee everie day and moment, and I do entreat and invite all the heavenly spirits, and all thy devout servants, to give thanks and praises together with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and magnifie thy holy & sweet name with great joy, and fervent devotion; and let all that reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament and receive it with full faith, deserve to find grace and mercie at thy hands, & pray humbly for me sinfull creature. And when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyfull union, and depart from thy sacred heavenly Table, well comforted and marvellously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poore and needie soul.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That man be not a curious searcher
of this Sacrement, but an
humble follower of Christ
submitting his sense
to faith.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THOU oughtest to beware of curious and unprofitable searching into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wilt not sink into the depth of doubt. He that is a searcher of Majesty, shall be opprest by glory. God is able to work more then man can understand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwaies ready to be taught, and do endeavour to walk in the sound paths of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicitie, that forsaketh the difficult wayes of questiones, and goeth on in the plain and assured path of Gods

Com-

Commandments. Many have lost devotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of understanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not understand, nor conceive those things that are under thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are above thee? Submit thy self to God, and let thy sense be subject to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about faith and the Sacrament, but this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemie. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou give answer to the doubts moved by the enemie, but believe the words of God, believe his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked Serpent will flee from thee, It is oftentimes ver-
ry

ry profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners, whom he already securely posses-
seth, but he sundrie wayes tempt-
eth and vexeth the faithfull and
devout.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere and undoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with un-
feigned reverence. And whatsoe-
ver thou art not able to under-
stand, commit securely to Al-
mighty God. God deceiveth thee
not : he is deceived that trusteth
too much to himself. God walketh
with the simple, revealeth himself
to the humble, giveth understand-
ing to little ones, openeth the sen-
ses of pure minds, and hideth
grace from the curious and proud.
Humane reason is weak, and may
be deceived, but true faith cannot
be deceived.

5. All reason and naturall
search ought to follow faith, not
to go before it, nor impugne it.

For

For faith and love do chiefly excell, and work in a hidden manner in this most blessed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, doth great and inscrutable things in heaven and in earth, and there is no searching of his wonderfull works. If the works of God were such, as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderfull and unspeakable.

FINIS.

